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APPROACHES TO HERMETIC POETRY: DOLCE STIL NOVO AND SCEVE'S DELIE

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled APPROACHES TO HERMETIC POETRY: DOLCE STIL NOVO AND SCEVE'S DELIE submitted by Joseph Pivato in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

This study of hermetic poetry has two objectives: (1) to determine the general boundaries of hermetic poetry by considering such literary phenomena as baroque and metaphysical poetry, allegory and intellectually complex verse; (2) to propose that there exists a tradition of hermetic poetry. This tradition is shared by a number of poets from varying backgrounds and historical periods; however this thesis concentrates on three authors from the dolce stil novo and on Maurice Scève. The focus here is not on influence but on the affinities found in an aesthetic and style of verse as it is demonstrated by the following works: Guinizelli's "Al cor gentil rempaira sempre amore," Cavalcanti's "Donna me prega -- per ch'eo voglio dire," Dante's "Le dolci rime d'amor ch' i' solia," and a selection of dizains from Scève's Délie.

In Délie careful consideration is given to the much neglected emblems and their relationship to the series of love lyrics. These woodcut pictures are examined both within the context of hermetic poetry and also as instances of the interaction between literature and the visual arts.

In 1936 Francesco Flora introduced the term poesia ermetica to describe contemporary Italian verse and French poetry in the symbolist tradition. This study attempts to bring this critical perspective of hermeticism up to date, and to show that it can be a useful way of examining certain works from Mediaeval and Renaissance periods.

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INTRODUCTION

A NEBULA OF TERMS

The concept of hermeticism is a relatively new one and thus is still in the process of being defined. Hermetic poetry was first given critical recognition by Francesco Flora in an early study.[1] In Italian the figurative meaning for ermetico is "oscuro, incomprensibile; impenetrabile," and ermetismo is explained as "corrente poetica contemporanea che per rafforzare il potere di suggestione della poesia usa volutamente un linguaggio intenso e oscuro."[2] Strictly defined hermetic poetry is a current in contemporary Italian verse; nevertheless,

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[1] La poesia ermetica (Bari: Laterza, 1936).

[2] Dizionario Garzanti della lingua italiana (Milano: Garzanti Editore, 1965), p. 619.

as it is used by critics the term is no longer limited to one national literature or one period.

One of the objects of this study is to help determine the general boundaries of hermetic poetry. Therefore we will be selective in our use of the term hermetic. The second reason for careful use of this term is that this study does not deal only with hermetic verse but also with metaphysical poetry and allegory. The term hermetic, then, is not always the most suitable to employ. This is especially true when we are discussing areas where these three and other kinds of poetry overlap and merge. With the concepts of baroque and metaphysical the discussion becomes involved with periods and styles. Because of these problems and for convenience and clarity I will at times use two broader terms to describe this general class of verse; these are: "intellectual poetry" and "poetry of intellectual complexity."

One of the justifications for adopting these terms is that scholars in this area of research constantly describe this kind of poetry by ultimately reducing definitions to the one outstanding trait: the intellectual quality of the verse. Brief passages from the literature will give a clearer idea of what we mean. The descriptions that follow will also serve as a preliminary or working definition of hermetic poetry. In his anthology published in 1921 Herbert J.C. Grierson says of metaphysical poets and poetry that

> It lays stress on the right things . . . . the more intellectual, less verbal, character of their wit compared with the conceits of the Elizabethans; the finer psychology of which their conceits are often the expression; their learned imagery; the argumentative, subtle evolution of their lyrics; above all the peculiar blend of passion and thought, feeling and ratiocination which is their greatest achievement.[3]

This characterization of metaphysical verse has been adopted by both Odette de Mourgues and Frank J. Warnke in their separate studies on European intellectual poetry.[4]

From a quite different line of study Fernando Figurelli describes the poetry of the dolce stil novo with the following words:

> Quand' anche quindi il sentimento abbia profondità di vita, nell'espressione, se non altro, acquisterà, quell'elemento di riflessione e di razionalità, che dà a quella poesia quel particolare tono di robustezza e di solennità che è proprio, e che si potrebbe dire forse la chiave della poesia del dolce stile.[5]

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[3] "Introduction" in Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), pp. xv-xvi.

[4] Metaphysical, Baroque and Précieux Poetry (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 7, and European Metaphysical Poetry (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 1, respectively.

[5] Il Dolce Stil Novo (Napoli: Ricciardi, 1933), p. 144.

J.E. Shaw in explaining Figurelli's notion of "rationalità" says "I should prefer to call it the studious and cultivated treatment of love."[6] The terms "ratiocination" and "rationalità," both try to name the peculiar intellectual quality of the verse. Of course all poetry has some intellectual elements but the kind of verse with which we are concerned asks for a considerable perspicacity from the reader. With regard to Scève's Délie Odette de Mourgues has observed:

> Scève would remain a difficult poet because the extreme concentration of thought, the subtle relations between the abstract and the concrete, and the argumentative quality in the verse, require an intellectual effort of logic and imagination on the part of the reader. Such difficulty is not deliberate or arbitrary. It is inherent in a form of poetry which . . . having complex problems to translate into poetic language can express that complexity only by means of a somewhat elaborate synthesis, thus demanding that the reader should grasp the intellectual content behind the emotion if he is to be moved by it at all.[7]

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[6] "The Dolce Stil Novo," in Guido Cavalcanti's Theory of Love (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1949), p. 137.

[7] Metaphysical, Baroque and Précieux Poetry, p. 11. Cf. Rosemond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1947), pp. 351-53.

At this point we are struck by the similarity between these descriptions of different poets and poems. Figurelli's words could apply to Scève as de Mourgues' remarks suit the stilnovisti. What will be of greater interest is comparisons among these various poets. Such an examination of the primary texts will give the ultimate justification for the use of any term to describe a mode of poetry. This we shall pursue in the later part of this study.

By applying the term hermetic poetry to specific examples of verse written by poets from varying backgrounds and historical periods I am suggesting that there exists a tradition of hermetic poetry. Though this tradition is shared by poets in addition to those few discussed here, my purpose at this time is not to present the entire historical map of this line of verse. Since my primary aim is to consider affinities in an aesthetic and style of verse the focus of this study will not be on influence, direct or indirect. While influence may be a factor in the similarities between the stil novo and Scève, it is not possible to establish such an historical relationship. Nevertheless where there are instances of intertextuality these will be pointed out.[8] One significant example of this is that both Dante and Scève in their respective use of the terms

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[8] Jonathan Culler, "Presupposition and Intertextuality," MLN 91, No. 6 (1976), 1380-96.

rima aspra and durs epygrammes indicate their awareness of a tradition of hermeticism, one which Quintilian described as "aspra et dura" (Institutionis Oratoriae, VIII, 6:62).

Like other traditions that extend over a number of literary periods, the tradition of hermetic verse is not a monolithic, homogeneous, unbroken current of writing. Rather it might be more useful to speak of types of hermetic poetry following the models of William Empson's Seven Types of Ambiguity[9] or F.J. Warnke's Versions of Baroque.[10] At this early stage in the definition of hermetic poetry, however, such a fixed system of classification may prove a hindrance to understanding the nature of the verse. A study of the types of hermetic poetry has been left for a future project.

The first chapter will deal with the twentieth-century background to the critical concern with hermetic poetry. T.S. Eliot was one of the first critics to recognize that English metaphysical poetry shared certain intellectual qualities with European verse of both earlier and later periods. But since metaphysical is a period term primarily used for English verse another term was found for the international line of intellectual verse. That term was hermetic poetry. Since

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9 (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930).

10 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972).

the publication of Flora's La poesia ermetica, the designation hermetic has been applied, at times imprecisely, to modern Italian authors, French symbolists and Mediaeval poets. In this way the phenomena of hermetic poetry is a twentieth-century literary perspective which is being placed on the verse of this and former periods. Thus a clear understanding of this critical perspective is necessary before we can deal with the term hermetic. In this regard we will examine how some of these associations between different groups of poets have come to be made. In the criticism of the twentieth-century we will trace two lines of development which have affected our view of literature in the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. The third path is the one suggested by this comparative study. That is to say, there is a relation between complex ambiguous writing of the hermetic type and writing that employs some form of multi-leveled mode to organize its different meanings—be this symbolism, allegory or impressionism.

In chapter two we will again return to the problem of terms in examining the concept of hermetic poetry. In this way, rather than putting forth prescriptions for hermetic poetry in this introduction, we will consider le mot et la chose after an overview of the twentieth-century background to this critical concern for hermeticism. Chapters three to six will examine the lyrics of three dolce stil novo poets: Guinizelli, Cavalcanti

and Dante. The focus of chapters seven and eight is Maurice Scève's Délie, its intellectual dimensions and its emblems. The work of these poets best demonstrates the thesis that there is a tradition of hermetic poetry. The conclusion presents a four part definition for hermetic verse that can be used as the starting point for future scholarship in this area of research.

CHAPTER I

AFTER ELIOT

In 1921 the Times Literary Supplement printed an essay entitled "The Metaphysical Poets," in which T.S. Eliot discussed the mental processes and verse of these particular Renaissance authors. The occasion for Eliot's essay was the then recent anthology by Herbert J.C. Grierson, Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century.[1] The TLS essay is significant for several reasons: it anticipates the directions that criticism on this verse was to take in the next several decades; it draws attention to a particular current of intellectual verse and it gives hints as to the development of Eliot's own poetry.

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[1] (London: Clarendon Press, 1921). Reprinted by Oxford Press, 1959.

Several observations that Eliot makes in this widely read essay relate the English metaphysical poets to antecedent European traditions:

> The poets of the seventeenth century, the successors of the dramatists of the sixteenth, possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience. They are simple, artificial, difficult, or fantastic, as their predecessors were; no less nor more than Dante, Guido Cavalcanti, Guinicelli, or Cino. In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in from which we have never recovered. . . .[2]

Eliot sees a link between the Italian poets of the dolce stil novo and the English metaphysical poets. He does not elaborate on this but subsequent critics have explored this association.[3] Later in the Times essay Eliot suggests some parallels between the metaphysical poets and the French symbolists: Baudelaire, Laforgue and Corbière. By drawing a connection between the English Renaissance poets and the symbolists Eliot has implied one between metaphysical and hermetic poetry. The essay leads the way for comparisons among all four groups of poets: the stilnovisti, the metaphysicals, the French symbolists and the modern hermetic poets (including

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[2] "The Metaphysical Poets," now in Selected Essays (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 287-88, third enlarged edition.

[3] See Mario Praz, "Poesia metafisica inglese del seicento," Poesia 3 & 4 (1946), pp. 232-312, who suggests three periods of metaphysical poetry, a Mediaeval, a Renaissance and a modern.

Eliot himself). One of the final statements in the essay makes a similar suggestion by placing the metaphysical poets into a larger tradition: "May we not conclude, then, that Donne, Crashaw, Vaughan, Herbert and Lord Herbert, Marvell, King, Cowley at his best, are in the direct current of English Poetry. . . ."[4] To Eliot English literature is part of European literature. The "direct current of English poetry" is a tradition of intellectual verse intimately linked to the continuum of European culture. For this view of English poetry Eliot found support in the original observations of Grierson who, in the introduction to his anthology states:

> But a metaphysical strand, concetti metafisici ed ideali, had run through the mediaeval love-poetry of which the Elizabethan sonnets are a descendant. It had attained its fullest development in the poems of Dante and his school, had been subordinated to rhetoric and subtleties of expression rather than thought in Petrarch. . . . Donne was a conscious reviver of the metaphysics of Dante. . . .[5]

By regarding Dante and his school, the stilnovisti, as the ancestors of the English metaphysicals and of the European Petrarchan poets, such as Scève, Grierson, like Eliot, sees a

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[4] Op. cit., p. 290.

[5] Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century, p. xx.

strand, a tradition of intellectual poetry that moves across not only linguistic and national boundaries but also across the changing literary fashions that come with time.

These observations on the links between the verse of the Renaissance and the stilnovisti eventually directed more critical attention not only to the English Renaissance but also to the Italian and Provençal poets. In this regard we must not forget some of the initial essays and translations of Ezra Pound which encouraged work in mediaeval literature.[6]

The twentieth-century perspective that Eliot brought into focus had some curious effects on the interpretations and approaches to Mediaeval and Renaissance authors. In dealing with the complexity of metaphysical poetry Eliot uses the conditions of modern verse:

> We can only say that it appears likely that poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be difficult. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results. The poet must become

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[6] Pound's The Spirit of Romance was first printed in London in 1910, his bilingual edition, The Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti (Boston, 1912), the significant essay "Cavalcanti: Medievalism," appeared in Make It New (1934). See also Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, ed. T.S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1968).

> more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary language into his meaning.[7]

Eliot is drawing an analogy between the seventeenth century and the twentieth. Note that the last sentence is a good description of, or prescription for, the modern hermetic poet. In other parts of the essay Eliot indicates that he sees Donne as possessing this ability for "constantly amalgamating disparate experience."[8] The Renaissance poet absorbs the variety and complexity of his culture to produce a poetry that is often obscure, tortured with conflicts and ambiguity—in a word, hermetic. In these terms Donne becomes a Renaissance poet anticipating the modern poet.

This modern perspective of difficult poetry affects the manner in which critics deal with the problems of intellectual complexity, obscurity and ambiguity in verse. Contemporary hermetic poets are regarded as having precursors in Mediaeval and Renaissance authors. Once this interpretation is accepted, either implicitly or explicitly, Mediaeval and Renaissance authors too are interpreted in terms of the characteristics of modern

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[7] "The Metaphysical Poets," p. 289. Cf. F.R. Leavis, "T.S. Eliot," in New Bearings in English Poetry (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932).

[8] Op. cit., p. 287.

verse. Thus we look at Scève's verse as hermetic,[9] at Cavalcanti's canzoni as examples of alienated individualism, and Dante's Vita Nuova as confessional.[10]

A study of the dimensions of Dante's influence on Eugenio Montale has revealed the latter's knowledge of and borrowing from the dolce stil novo poets.[11] The modern Italian hermetic poet's perspective of the Mediaeval Italian authors is coloured by his own preoccupations as poeta ermetico, that is, the view of a literary work as an object separate from the artist and from the real world. In terms of this concept of impersonal art the attitudes of Montale and Eliot have been compared and contrasted as the two affected one another.[12] Montale, the most consistently hermetic poet of his generation, first translated some of Eliot's Ariel Poems in 1929 and 1933, thereby initiating a series of Eliot translations in Italian.[13]

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[9] Hans Staub, "Scève poète hermétique?" Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Etudes Françaises No. 15 (1963), pp. 25-39.

[10] See T.S. Eliot, "The Vita Nuova," in Dante (London: Faber & Faber, 1929), pp. 55-64.

[11] Arshi Pipa, Montale and Dante (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1968).

[12] Claire Huffman, "T.S. Eliot, Eugenio Montale and the Vagaries of Influence," Comparative Literature 27, No. 3 (1975), 193-207.

[13] See "Appunti per un inventario," in S. Ramat, L'Ermetismo (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1969), pp. 393-465.

The statement by Eliot that modern poets "must be difficult," since their work reflects the complexity of their experience in culture and society, implies the same for metaphysical poets. This view of conscious obscurity has the suggestion that there is an imitation of complex experience and thought. This mimetic notion is a significant one in Empson's Seven Types of Ambiguity. In the fourth type ambiguity, Empson states that complexity results when "two or more meanings of a statement do not agree among themselves, but combine to make clear a more complicated state of mind in the author."[14] Thus the ambiguity of the poetic statement is a direct reflection of the complex state of mind of the poet. In the seven chapters of Empson's book the Elizabethan and metaphysical poets play a significant role as examples of the various types of ambiguity that require close verbal analysis.

The extent of Eliot and Empson's influence on this activity of examining ambiguity, whether hermetic or mimetic, can be seen in the fact that it reached the criticism of French and Italian literature: J.D. Hubert, L'Esthétique des Fleurs du

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[14] (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930), p. 133. In the preface to the second edition Empson acknowledges that the book was prompted by Eliot's criticism on "the newly discovered merits of Donne, Marvell and Dryden," p. viii. Note also the work of I.A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism (1925) and Practical Criticism (1929).

mal: essai sur l'ambiguité poétique, and Alberto Del Monte, Studi sulla poesia ermetica medievale.[15]

The renewed interest in the English metaphysical poets had productive effects that resulted in more attention being given to lesser known continental writers, especially if these resembled their English counterparts. Maurice Scève became metaphysical as did Pontus de Tyard. In 1930 Alan M. Boase re-discovered Jean de Sponde (1557-1595) and introduced him as a "French metaphysical."[16]

In 1953 Odette de Mourgues used Grierson's interpretation of metaphysical verse to examine the poetry of Maurice Scève. The "metaphysical strand" is now broadened considerably from that of the school of Donne, since de Mourgues compares dizains from Scève's Délie not to Donne's verse but to sonnets from Philip Sydney's Astrophel and Stella. For this critic both Scève and Sidney are early metaphysical poets.[17]

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[15] Hubert (Genève: Pierre Cailler, 1953). Hubert gratefully acknowledges the initial work of Empson, p. 26. Del Monte (Napoli: Giannini, 1953).

[16] "Then Malherbe Came," The Criterion X (1930-31), 287-94. (The Criterion at this time was edited by Eliot.)

[17] "An Early Metaphysical Poet--Maurice Scève," in Metaphysical, Baroque and Précieux Poetry (London: Oxford U. Press, 1953), pp. 11 and 12.

While de Mourgues does not extend her examination as far back as the stilnovisti, in a more recent book, European Metaphysical Poetry, Frank J. Warnke, harkening back to the suggestions of Grierson and Eliot, draws some modest parallels. Warnke does not begin his line of reasoning from the English metaphysicals but from Maurice Scève:

> There is some justification for seeing in him [Scève] the earliest Metaphysical poet, but such a description will require at least some modification. In its thoroughgoing deification of the lady, as in its unvarying formality of diction and rhythm, Délie is closely related to the work of the Italian stilnovisti of the late thirteenth century, and it seems likely that their influence, in addition to the unquestionable influence of Petrarch, worked on Scève. . . . Stilnovist poetry itself, intellectual in structure, philosophical in vocabulary, conceptual in imagery, is something like Metaphysical poetry. . . .[18]

We have moved back to the stilnovisti from T.S. Eliot by way of the English metaphysical poets and Maurice Scève. There is one other path back to the Mediaeval Italian poets which, for English-speaking readers, also begins with Eliot's criticism. In this regard the year 1920 is significant for the publication of two other influential essays. In "Hamlet and his Problems" Eliot developed the notion of the "objective correlative" which is part

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[18] (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1961), p. 29.

of the doctrine of impersonal art.[19] In "Tradition and the Individual Talent" he explains this theory of literature:

> My meaning is that the poet has, not a "personality" to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways.[20]

It is this doctrine of impersonal poetry that Eliot uses to interpret the metaphysical poets' mental processes and verse.

> A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility. When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience . . . [and] engaged in the task of trying to find the verbal equivalent for states of mind and feeling.[21]

The theory of an impersonal poetry and the modern practices of hermetic verse are related, as is evidenced in the ideal of pure poetry advocated by Paul Valéry and others.[22] But when these

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[19] In The Sacred Wood (London: Methuen, 1920), pp. 95-103.

[20] Ibid., p. 56.

[21] "The Metaphysical Poets," pp. 287 and 289.

[22] James R. Lawler, "Valéry's Pureté," in The Language of French Symbolism (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1969), Bernard Weinberg, "The Limits of Hermeticism, or Hermeticism and Intelligibility," in The Limits of Symbolism (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1966), and see also Contini, "Risposta a un' inchiesta sull'Ermetismo," footnote no. 24.

modernist theories are applied to Mediaeval poets a curious interpretation comes about. In order to explain the difficult quality of the dolce stil novo the Italian critic, Gianfranco Contini, writes in his introductory essay to Dante's Rime:

> Il dolce stile è la scuola che contiene con maggior consapevolezza e buona grazia il senso della collaborazione a un' opera di poesia oggettiva, e insomma la scuola che piú ha il senso della scuola.[23]

To Contini this "poesia oggetiva" is the result of collaboration of the poets in finding the "verbal equivalent." The common belief of the poets in an absolute inspiration is the transcendant principle which moves the verse into the realm of objective art. Contini's notion of depersonalization and collaboration is related to Eliot's theories of the individual talent fitting into a tradition. In both cases there is a collaboration with other poets that results in the impersonal work of art. For Contini this inter-action between conventions and the individual poet resulting in an objective art is a trait of hermetic verse:

> In pratica, ogni poetica dell' Assoluto (stilnovismo, symbolismo e anche "ermetismo") tende ad affermarsi in una società letteraria, e in quest' altra apparente

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[23] (Torino: Einaudi, 1946), p. xii. Note that K. Foster and P. Boyde, edd., Dante's Lyric Poetry, 2 vols. (London: Oxford U. Press, 1967), follow Contini's interpretation of Dante's poetry.

> contraddizione è una seconda prova, direi biologica, di vitalità.[24]

If we accept the notion that the hermeticism of stilnovo verse is due in part to this impersonal element, we are faced with another problem: the degree of collaboration among the poets. Guinizelli, Cavalcanti, and Dante at times do echo one another in their verse but by and large their work is quite identifiably the product of separate and distinct personalities. Cavalcanti is philosophical and impersonal in some of his canzoni but his is, nevertheless, a unique voice in the poetry of his time as has been recognized ever since Dante's De Vulgari Eloquentia.[25] As Contini suggests, there is an inherent contradiction in the ideal of hermeticism.

A more traditional explanation of the obscurity of stil novo verse is that given by Erich Auerbach:

> A number of attempts have been made to interpret it, that is, to explain rationally and systematically what is unintelligible to us, but in vain--all of them have been fanciful and forced. . . . It seems to me, rather that the problem itself is insoluble, for an authentic

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[24] "Risposta a un'inchiesta sull' Ermetismo," in Un Anno di letteratura (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1946), p. 149.

[25] A. Marigo and P.G. Ricci, edd. (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1957), see sections I, xiii, 3; II, vi, 6; II, xii, 3.

> occult doctrine is not a rational system that is concealed only for external reasons and might be divulged to all, but is something secret by nature, which is never fully known even to the initiate and ceases to be itself the moment one tries to make it universal.[26]

This is the hermeticism of the arcana rather than that of intellectual complexity and condensed style. Here Auerbach's interpretation deals primarily with the ideas behind the content of the poems rather than with their difficult style. While Auerbach points out the obscure nature of the poems he chooses to stop there.

One of the positive consequences of the work of Eliot, Empson and Contini is that it tries to bring us beyond the romantic attitude of hushed reverence before the mystery of a difficult poem. Though we are sometimes taken into the realm of psychology with I.A. Richards and Empson, we now also look more closely at the language of poetry itself. Nevertheless many questions are still left unanswered. Is hermetic poetry the result of deliberate suppression or an unconscious reflection of complex intellectual striving? What is the relationship

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[26] "Dante's Early Poetry," in Dante Poet of the Secular World (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 27. The German edition was published in Berlin, 1929.

between the public and private sides of the poetry? Does it involve private inspiration or collaboration with other poets?

Implicit in the very act of writing his cryptic poem, "Donna me prega," is Cavalcanti's desire to communicate his special vision of love. This intention is made explicit in the very first line of the canzone, "per ch'eo voglio dire," that is, "because I want to tell. . . ." How do we determine the intentions of a poet? How do we distinguish the true from the apparent intentions of a hermetic poet? In addition to the poetry of Guinizelli, Cavalcanti, and Dante we will ask these questions of Scève's Délie.[27] A brief outline of the style of this kind of verse might give us some clue as to the assumptions contained in these difficult poems.

One of the problems in approaching the poetic style of Cavalcanti or Scève with twentieth century views of hermetic poetry is that this may lead us to forget the differences between the classical conventions of verse and the modern ones. The way a poet employs syntax is one way of distinguishing between the two. A poet conforming to the classical conventions tends to observe the systems of logic and grammar. His rhetoric follows

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[27] Albert Béguin, "Sur la mystique de Maurice Scève," in Poésie de la présence (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1957), pp. 71-72, argues that Scève is neither impersonal nor hermetic in the way that Mallarmé is.

the traditional models of reasoning and argument: analogy, syllogism, comparison, amplification, repetition and the other techniques recommended by manuals of speech. Guinizelli's canzone, "Al cor gentil ripaira sempre amore," uses the devices of: tautologia, exergasia, ploce, commoratio and anadiplosis. From Scève's Délie we get adunaton in dizains 119 and 149, double adunaton in 17, chiasmus in dizains 150, 270 and 370. While these techniques are characteristic of expository style of expression, their use by hermetic poets can often give the verse an impersonal or objective quality.

A poet in the symbolist or modernist tradition, on the other hand, does not feel bound to use the syntax of logicians or grammarians.[28] His rhetorical devices are not from the classical conventions. He tends to improvise his syntax for effect. He juxtaposes disparate images and telescopes expressions producing a concentrated style that is often unintelligible to the reader. Remember Eliot's prescription for the modern poet: "The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary language into his meanings."[29] The post-symbolist hermetic poet does not

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[28] Donald Davie, "What is Modern Poetry," in Articulate Energy (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1955), p. 148, sees modern verse beginning with a change of attitude towards poetic syntax.

[29] "The Metaphysical Poets," p. 289.

describe an emotion literally or directly; instead he uses "verbal equivalents for states of mind and feeling." More specifically the devices he commonly employs are: incomplete metaphors, suppressed analogies, substitute terms, emphasis on the connotation of words, meanings that are vaguely suggested and impressionistic moods.[30]

These rhetorical techniques do result in the difficult style of the modern hermetic poet, but they are not the devices common to Cavalcanti or Scève. While their poems follow the rules of logic and grammar, they are nevertheless enigmatic. The canzone of Guinizelli referred to above is structured in a most orderly manner. There is no apparent attempt to hide anything. There is symmetry and logic, yet it remains a difficult poem. On the literal level we understand most of the words but the full meaning of some key terms, "gentil," "gentilezza," "intelligenza," and the underlying levels of meaning escape us.

At this point, then, we can draw the tentative observation that Cavalcanti, Guinizelli, and Scève may at times be difficult to comprehend because they may bend a rule of grammar or ignore a logical connection as is the case in modern hermeticism, but generally these poets are obscure for the following reasons:

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[30] See R. Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery, pp. 20-21, in which she makes some interesting contrasts.

(1) they employ a dense rhetorical style; (2) they deal with complex subject matter and emotional conflict; (3) they employ structural patterns beneath the surface of the literal poem. The poetic works of these authors are hermetic because there are several possible levels of activity, and, therefore, of meaning in the poems; (4) they write within a special context.

To a sophisticated modern reader the works of these authors are obscure and seem ambiguous because he is very often too oriented towards the literal level of literature. In 1940 Philip Wheelwright argued against this logical positivist approach to literature by postulating the notion of "plurisignation." To Wheelwright the plurisign in a poem may "alter its meaning from instance to instance; it tends also to carry a plurality of meanings in any given instance."[31] Is this the manner in which we are to deal with the concept of "gentil" in Guinizelli's canzone? It does seem to vary its meaning from its progress in the poem.

Because of his understanding of Biblical allegory the concept of simultaneous meaning is probably easier for a reader of the 1300's to comprehend than it is for a modern reader.

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[31] "On the Semantics of Poetry," first printed in The Kenyon Review (1940), now in Essays on the Language of Literature, edd., S. Chatman and S.R. Levin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1967), p. 253.

Today the problem is made more acute by the conflicting schools of criticism, philosophy, the specialties of linguistics and semiotics. In this confusion, however, may lie the starting point of a solution to the problem. As Northrop Frye has observed:

> The principle of manifold or "polysemous" meaning, as Dante calls it, is not a theory any more, still less an exploded superstition, but an established fact. The thing that has established it is the simultaneous development of several different schools of modern criticism, each making a distinctive choice of symbols in its analysis. The modern student of critical theory is faced with a body of rhetoricians who speak of texture and frontal assaults, with students of history who deal with traditions and sources, with critics using material from psychology and anthropology . . . with students of myth, rituals, archetypes, metaphors, ambiguities and significant forms.[32]

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[32] "Ethical Criticism: Theory of Symbols," in Anatomy of Criticism (New York: Atheneum, 1968), p. 72.

CHAPTER II

HERMETICISM: THE TERM AND ITS CONTEXT

Conflict, contradiction and confusion are among the results of the many currents of criticism which we encounter today. The difficulty in communication and in arriving at an understanding is due not only to the increasing number of terms for distinguishing more and more phenomena, but also to the problems of the overlapping of phenomena and the synonymity of terms. We encounter the former in discussions of metaphysical and baroque poetry,[1] and

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[1] René Wellek, "The Concept of Baroque in Literary Scholarship," in Concepts of Criticism, ed., S.G. Nichols (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1963), pp. 69-127. F.J. Warnke, "Introduction," in European Metaphysical Poetry, O. de Mourgues, Metaphysical, Baroque and Précieux Poetry.

the latter in studies of aestheticism or "l'art pour l'art," or the Decadent Movement.[2]

The concept of hermeticism is difficult to define because it has been used to mean several different things and sometimes all of them at once. In some studies the term refers to the occult writings of Hermes Trismegistus, and to the effects this system of mystical thought has had on the arts, literature, and symbolism since the revival of Platonism in Renaissance Europe.[3] We shall refer to this as the first meaning of hermeticism.

In modern literature, hermeticism denotes a movement in Italian poetry that begins at about the First World War. In 1936 Francesco Flora's critical study, La poesia ermetica, gave the term this meaning.[4] Flora was concerned with the use of analogy in verse and with its relation to the musical quality of the new Italian poetry. Here the suggestive power of the verse is emphasized by the wilful use of obscure language. This is the second meaning for hermeticism. But Flora applied the term not

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[2] R.V. Johnson, Aestheticism (London: Methuen, 1969).

[3] Jean Festugière, La Philosophie de l'amour de Marcile Ficino et son influence sur la littérature française au XVI^{e} siècle (Paris: Librairie Philosophique, 1941), first ed., 1923. Jean Dagens, "Hermétisme et Cabale en France de Lefèvre d'Etaples à Bossuet," Revue de Littérature Comparée 35 (1961), 5-16.

[4] (Bari: Laterza, 1936), re-edited 1942.

just to Ungaretti but to Baudelaire, Mallarmé and especially to Valéry. Flora thus left open the possibility of expanding the term to include other European authors and to interpret hermeticism not simply as an Italian movement in poetry but, as an international style of writing verse.

As an historical stream of poetry some critics have traced elements of hermetic verse in Novalis and Poe, in other French symbolists like Rimbaud, in Apollinaire and Eluard, and in T.S. Eliot.[5] Still others have interpreted hermeticism as a much older line of writing that goes back to the beginning of vernacular verse, to the troubadours and the trobar clus.[6]

This third description of hermeticism is the one that is used as a starting point in this study. Because hermetic poetry is written in a style that demands considerable intellectual perspicacity on the part of the reader it has affinities with

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[5] Edward Williamson, "Contemporary Italian Poetry," Poetry, 79, 3/4 (1951-52). Silvio Ramat, L'Ermetismo (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1969).

[6] A. Del Monte, Studi sulla poesia ermetica medievale. J. Frappier, "Aspects de l'hermétisme dans la poésie médiévale," Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Etudes Françaises, No. 15 (1963), 9-24. I.M. Cluzel, "L'Hermétisme du trouvadour Cerveri," Annales de l'Institut d'Etudes Occidentales, 4e série, tome 2, No. 5 (1970), 49-64.

metaphysical verse and with allegory. This similarity exists in specific elements of style.

When we expand the meaning of hermeticism to include particular styles of writing from Mediaeval, Renaissance and Romantic authors we find that we must face the problem of the use of occult doctrines and mystical philosophy. We must return to a consideration of the writing of Hermes Trismegistus. The first meaning of hermeticism is combined with the third and thus produces a fourth: poetry that is obscure both because of its style and because of its use of esoteric ideas.

We have already seen that Auerbach feels that this is the reason for the incomprehensibility of dolce stil novo verse. He suggests that we should accept the philosophy of these poems as a mystery that cannot be totally understood. It becomes more profitable for us to concentrate on the style of Guinizelli, Cavalcanti and Dante's poems. The philosophy in these poems seems to be that of the thirteenth century, for the most part. The possible connection between the poets of the dolce stil novo and the writings of Trismegistus is unlikely since the Corpus Hermeticum was not available in Europe until Marcilio Ficino's 1463 Latin translation of Pimandre, that is, parts I to XIV of the Corpus Hermeticum.[7]

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[7] In France Lefèvre d'Etaples published Ficino's Latin translation in 1494 and again in 1505. See Dagens' article, op. cit.

When Maurice Scève was writing, 1520 to 1560, this and other esoteric books were available and much discussed; thus they must be taken into account in examining the French poet's hermetic verse. Because of Scève's use of emblems in his Délie one of the books that becomes important is Andrea Alciati's Emblematum Liber, the first European emblem book.[8] This popular work is supposed to have been influenced by translations of Greek manuscripts on hieroglyphics.[9] Renaissance authors and artists were fascinated with hieroglyphs because they thought that these images were an ideographic form of writing with which Egyptian priests foretold events and from which Greek philosophers had derived ancient wisdom. The emblem, the Renaissance equivalent of the hieroglyph, still retained this occult element for many authors and artists.

In addition to these two specific works, Italian humanists had aroused a good deal of interest in Greek and Roman literature and philosophy. The Platonic Academy in Florence is the best known example of this.[10] Neo-Platonism

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[8] Printed in Augsburg at the Heinrich Steyner press, 1531.

[9] Alciati's acquaintance, Filippo Fasanini, translated Horapollo's Hieroglyphica in 1517. For a detailed study see Liselotte Dieckmann, "The Ancient and Renaissance Foundation of Hieroglyphical Thinking," in Hieroglyphics, The History of a Literary Symbol (St. Louis: Washington University Press, 1970), pp. 1-47.

[10] See Jean Festugière, op. cit.

in art and literature became common to the point of being unconsciously used.[11] Scève was writing in a literary and artistic environment that took part in these Renaissance activities. This is especially the case in Lyon; as a centre of printing it was involved in the publication of emblem books, translations and commentaries on books of philosophy. In terms of Scève's poetry three other traditions are significant here: the literary conventions of courtly love; the French poetry of the Grands Rhétoriqueurs; and the growing popularity of European Petrarchism.[12] Scève's borrowings from Petrarch is a controversial point.[13]

Given this cultural background it is difficult to determine which of these were the more dominant influences which helped to shape Scève's Délie. While the possible mysticism behind Scève's verse is a consideration which we must keep in mind, it is not the most profitable one in terms of a literary study. The stylistic difficulties of the poetry itself are quite demanding

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[11] Erwin Panofsky, Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

[12] J. Vianey, Le Pétrarquisme en France au XVI^{e} siècle (Paris, 1909). L. Forster, The Icy Fire: Studies in European Petrarchism (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

[13] See E. Parturier, ed., Délie, object de plus haute vertu (Paris: Droz, 1902). D. Coleman, "Some Notes on Scève and Petrarch," French Studies 14 (1960), 293-303. D. Fenoaltea, "The Poet in Nature: Sources of Scève's Délie in Petrarch's Rime," French Studies, 27 (1973), 257-70.

and will be our prime consideration here. As Jean Frappier has observed:

> S'agit-il aujourd'hui entre nous d'hermétisme au sens propre et premier du mot, de la science d'Hermès Trismégiste. . . . Je ne le pense pas. Que le contenu du poème soit ésotérique ou non, je tiens avant tout l'hermétisme dont nous avons à traiter pour un fait de style, de technique littéraire, une obscurité voulue, calculée du langage. Il va de soi qu'à une forme hermétique peut s'unir un sens rare et profond--et dans ce cas, tant mieux. . . .[14]

For this study, then, hermeticism is an international style of writing verse rather than a secret code in verse form.

The four descriptions of hermeticism which are listed here could be used as the names of four types of hermetic poetry, but it would not be a useful exercise to simply class hermetic verse under four labels. The definitions of hermeticism are not necessarily suited as categories for bodies of verse. The first type may include writing which is not poetry at all but secret code in verse form. An ancient example of this type is the Parmenides fragment. The second type deals primarily with Italian verse of a select number of poets. The third and fourth types, on the other hand, are broad enough to allow us to consider the many

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[14] "Aspects de l'hermétisme dans la poésie médiévale," p. 13.

different aspects associated with hermetic poetry: symbolism, impressionism, allegory and the intellectual complexity of metaphysical verse.

When we extend the meaning of hermeticism to include particular styles of writing from different periods of literary history, we encounter the problem of overlapping of terms. If we find hermetic verse written by metaphysical poets does this mean that hermetic poetry is the same as metaphysical poetry? If by metaphysical verse we understand what Grierson and de Mourgues consider it to be, then we can see how some metaphysical poems have the intellectual complexity and obscurity of hermetic poetry.[15] The same would be true if we were to consider verse that was Petrarchan, mannerist, baroque or précieux. In each case we must consider the poem individually. For this reason it is impractical to make a firm list of elements and devices common to all the species of hermetic verse as Del Monte tries to do.[16]

Because one of the approaches to hermetic poetry is from the English literary tradition, the use of the term metaphysical verse is necessary. But from the perspective of continental Europe the term baroque is more acceptable. Now we can say that despite controversy and the long resistance to its adoption among

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[15] Grierson, p. xv, and de Mourgues, p. 11.

[16] "Determinazione dell'ermetismo," in Studi sulla poesia ermetica medievale, pp. 18-19.

English critics, baroque has been accepted as the generic designation for the style of the whole period which falls between the Renaissance and the neo-classical era. As the designation of a period in European literary history, baroque refers not to a precisely definable style but to a cluster of related styles. One of these is the metaphysical, another is préciosité. These, along with marinismo and gongorismo, are local or national variants of the same basic baroque aesthetic.[17]

We can generally identify hermetic verse if its stylistic complexity and obscurity is due to some deeper intellectual ambiguity. This ambiguity may sometimes appear as a paradox or inner conflict. The complication of such a poem is inherent in it as style reflects the intensity of the thought or emotion or the two in a state of tension. But if the intricacy of a poem is due to more superficial devices of rhetoric and if the thought is shallow and the subject trivial, it is likely that we are not dealing with a hermetic poem.

There is one important way of determining hermetic verse from other forms of writing. From Francesco Flora's initial attribution of hermetic poetry to French symbolists to Cluzel's

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[17] Harold B. Segel, The Baroque Poem: A Comparative Survey (New York: Dutton, 1974). Segel's is the most recent summary of the baroque controversy. See also F.J. Warnke's European Metaphysical Poetry and Versions of Baroque.

latest study of hermeticism in troubadour verse we can see a constant association between the concept of hermeticism and poetry that tends to be multi-leveled in some form, be it by the ambiguity of two of more meanings, by plurisignation, by symbolism, be it polysemous or allegorical.

From symbolist poetry we have Baudelaire's sonnet, "Recueillement," which exists on two levels of meaning. The second meaning is one suggested by the surface metaphor. "Le Bateau ivre" of Rimbaud is another difficult poem with different levels of meaning. Here too some of the terms of the metaphor are suppressed and thus the underlying meanings can only be inferred. The impressionistic poem, "L'Après-midi d'un faune," also has several activities and several levels of interpretation. But again Mallarmé is only suggesting different patterns of thought in vague and indirect ways. In these cases the hermetic obscurity is due to the multi-leveled form of the poem.

Just as all poetry has intellectual elements, to a greater or lesser degree, all verse also has some symbolic aspects. Indeed poetry is suggestive of other meanings by its very nature.[18]

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[18] I.A. Richards, "Analysis," in Practical Criticism (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1929). Cleanth Brooks, "The Heresy of Paraphrasis," in The Well Wrought Urn (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1947). René Wellek, "The Mode of Existence of a Literary Work of Art," in Theory of Literature, Wellek and Warren (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1942).

This verse of intellectual complexity is not symbolic in the obvious way a naïve allegory makes use of personification to represent another level of meaning. Rather the complexity of hermetic verse is the result of the merging of the polysemous and the ambiguous--a merging that is inherent in the poetry itself.

Thus far in this study, as the above statement suggests, we have taken for granted the relation between the ambiguity of poetic language and the allegorical. This assumption now needs some further exploration. In recent criticism the term ambiguity has come, more and more, to be associated with ambivalence, tension, paradox and irony. For our purposes this is not a positive connection. "Ambiguous" should not be interchangeable with "ambivalent." In the interpretation of modern works of literature, it is sometimes the case that the expression of ambivalence is a reflection of ambivalent feeling; that is, either A or B or both. T.S. Eliot's Prufrock comes to mind. Ambiguity too has come to represent dichotomies, or the reconciling of opposites; thus tension and paradox. But this is not necessarily the case with works in the classical tradition.

In this study ambiguity refers to the different meanings that can be derived from a complex poetic expression.[19] These

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[19] Winnifred Nowottny, "Ambiguity," in The Language Poets Use (London: Athlone Press, 1962), pp. 146-58, would prefer the terms "extraloquial" for ambiguous and "extralocution" for ambiguity when discussing literature.

different meanings are not necessarily in contradiction with one another. The various levels of an allegory are not in tension with each other, rather they are different strata in the poem. For us ambiguity is not a confusion of senses or a vagueness of expression, but a plurality of specific meanings, all of which can be tied to concrete patterns in the poetic work, and the literary context.

Dante's "Canzone Terza" in the Convivio, beginning "Le dolci rime d'amor ch'i' solia," illustrates this structure of ambiguity. This canzone is an attempt at defining the concept of gentilezza, a notion about which Dante makes clear statements as to what it is and what it is not. But the very fact that the canzone is a paradiastole, an explicit statement of various meanings of the term gentilezza, gives the term and the poem other meanings. Dante uses procatalepsis, in which he anticipates and refutes the arguments of others against his doctrine of love. In this context too the meaning varies. There is a pattern of repetition and previews in the canzone which give the explicit definitions other levels of significance. Within the context of the dolce stil novo the interaction of this canzone with others on similar themes which it echoes, results in further elaborations of significant senses. We thus have five possible versions of the meaning of the poem, all working simultaneously like the levels of meaning in an allegory.

In this canzone the ambiguous and the allegorical merge, since the allegorical is not entirely on the conscious level as it is in the allegory of theologians of the Commedia. The poet is not completely in control of the various meanings in his work, thus ambiguity. The canzone illustrates what Susanne Langer has observed about the more successful examples of symbolic art:

> The same emotional pattern shines through many experiences and on many levels of life, as emotional patterns generally do; that is why a true artistic symbol always seems to point to other concrete phenomena, actual or virtual, and to be impoverished by the assignment of any one import--that is to say, by the logical consumation of the meaning-relation.[20]

The ambiguity and polysemous nature of a poetic image, a pattern in a poem, or an entire poem is due to the relation of these to a larger context. It is this which makes the poems we are about to examine hermetic. Scève and the poets of the dolce stil novo, Guinizelli, Cavalcanti and Dante, are the best examples of this type of hermeticism.

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[20] Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art (New York: Scribners, 1953), p. 226.

CHAPTER III

THE KNOT THAT KEEPS:

DANTE LOOKS AT THE DOLCE STIL NOVO

There are two conflicting forces operating in Dante's work: one is the impulse of the private individual, the author interested in producing the pure literary work; the other is the drive of a popular artist who sees his task as one of collecting and transmitting the traditions of the past. The first impulse is one that Dante shares with Cavalcanti, Guinizelli and with troubadour poets like Arnaut Daniel. In this vein Dante included his most important hermetic poems among the lyrics collected in the Vita Nuova and the Convivio. The second motivation is one that becomes dominant in Dante's later work, the Commedia. In the Italian epic Dante is able to adapt ancient traditions, current beliefs and popular

folklore into a unified literary work accessible on some levels even to the school child.

The Purgatorio

In several cantos of the Purgatorio Dante looks back on the difficult lyrics of the dolce stil novo poets and considers its significance for the [illegible] his time. Implicit in these scenes of recollection in the Commedia is Dante's awareness of the two currents in his own poetry: the hermetic and the revelatory. With the advantages of hindsight Dante is able to show some of the stages of his development as a poet.

As the author of La Divina Commedia, however, the Italian poet puts a special structure on the literary activities of the stilnovisti. From these cantos the reader can derive four simultaneous levels of meaning for Dante's statements on poetry and the dolce stil novo. The first is the literal level of the poet-pilgrim meeting the spirits of other poets: Bonagiunta, Guinizelli and Arnaut Daniel. The second is the aesthetic demands of the poetry itself, especially with regard to materia and style. The third is poetry as inspired by human love. The fourth is poetry as inspired by divine love. This polysemous arrangement follows a similar hierarchical structure as the allegory of theologians. Here, it could be called the allegory of the hermetic poet. The first and third levels are in the domain of the poet's public role, whereas the second and fourth are the preoccupations of the hermetic

versifier. An examination of these scenes from the Purgatorio shows how these different levels are inter-related.

In a famous episode in the Purgatorio Dante meets Bonagiunta Orbiccini, a Lucchese poet and a prominent follower of the Guittone school of poetry. When they meet, the soul of the older poet, recognizing Dante, asks

> Ma di' s' i' veggio qui colui che fore
> trasse le nove rime, cominciando
> "Donne ch' avete intelleto d'amore."
>
> [But tell me if I truly see before me that person
> who made new rimes beginning with the poem
> "Ladies who know by insight what love is."][1]

By his question Bonagiunta, a spirit who now has the clearer vision from the afterlife, indicates his awareness that Dante's style of verse, "le nove rime," is a break with the poetic conventions of their time. This is evident by the fact that Bonagiunta has chosen to refer to a lyric by Dante that is found in La Vita Nuova, at a point in the work where the poet begins a group of poems in praise of Beatrice. In his commentary to these sections Dante says that he is trying to write poems using "matera

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[1] Purgatorio, ed. N. Sapegno (Firenze: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1956), XXIV, 49-51. All quotations from the Commedia will be from this edition. All translations are mine. I have translated Italian and Latin quotations where it seems necessary to make clear important aspects of my interpretation.

nuova e più nobile che la passata."[2] Up to this point in the Vita Nuova Dante has been writing verses addressed to Beatrice expressing his feelings and explaining the effects of love on himself personally. But now the poet begins to write verses concerned, not with his own feeling, but with the praise of Beatrice. With this change of materia comes a shift in style. One element of this changed style is that the poems are no longer addressed to the lady but to a third person or persons. Up to this point the reward for the lover's attention to his lady has been her saluto. From this instant this is no longer the poet's goal. Instead he tells us that his beatitudine now resides "In quelle parole che lodano la donna mia" [In those words which praise my lady; XVII, 6]. The direction of the poet's concern has reversed from inward moving to outward moving. The poet's love has become caritas.[3] Levels two, three, and four merge.

The words, "In quelle parole," must also be considered in terms of Dante's style in the lyric poems. When Dante changes the

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[2] La Vita Nuova, ed. L. Pietrobono (Firenze: Sansoni, 1968), XVII-XIX. All quotations to this work are from this edition.

[3] Charles Singleton, An Essay on the Vita Nuova (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 90, points out that this is a dramatic change from the troubadour tradition of love which saw reward for the lover coming from the lady not the literary work itself.

primary audience in the poem he is no longer in the revelatory style, one that expresses personal feeling. Rather he becomes concerned with external questions, the state of the lady, the nature of love, the poem itself as a work, the poem as a means of praising the lady. Dante's emphasis on "quelle parole " is the preoccupation of the hermetic poet.

By having Bonagiunta refer to this particular place in the Vita Nuova Dante is drawing our attention to this stage in his development, and to his style. Aware of Bonagiunta's special knowledge as a spirit Dante answers his question with the cryptic words:

> I' mi son un che quando
> Amor mi spira, noto e a quel modo
> che' e' ditta dentro vo significando.
>
> [I am one who when
> Love inspires me, I take note and, in the same
> manner that he dictates within me, express it faithfully.]
>
> (XXIV, 52-54)

This much discussed declaration by Dante contains some suggestion as to the nature of dolce stil novo poetry. The humility of the speaker's words is an important element in the love poetry of the Provençal tradition.[4] But Dante here recalls not only that but

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[4] Arnaut Daniel expresses a similar subjugation to love with the words, "Obre e lim motz de valor ab art d'Amor," as does Cavalcanti in a sonnet to Guido Orlandi, "Amore ha fabbricato cio ch'io limo." Note the verbs fabbricare from fabbro, smith and limare, to file.

also Richard of St. Victor's ideal of caritas:

> Solus proinde de digne loquitur qui secundum quod cor dictat verba componit.
>
> [Only he speaks of that subject worthily who composes the words as his heart dictates.][5]

The troubadour convention is combined with the Christian view of love to produce a new materia for verse. It is this notion of love, this knowledge of its nature and effects which is part of the sophistication of dolce stil novo verse.

Implicit in Dante's words to Bonagiunta is the idea that he and the other stilnovisti poets have moved away from the poetic conventions of their time because of this special view of love. Their poetry is the result of an intellectual, as well as an emotional, preoccupation with the nature and effects of love. It is this concern, as well as sincerity of expression and faithfulness to poetic inspiration, that has made Dante and the stilnovisti reject the rhetorical writing of the Guittone school and the blind imitation of Provençal models found in the Sicilian school.

Bonagiunta indicates that he understands the implied distinction that Dante is making and also the nature of the younger poet's inspiration:

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[5] Tractatus de gradibus charitatis, PL 196, 1195. Quoted in Singleton, p. 91.

O frate, issa vegg'io . . . il nodo
che 'l Notaro e Guittone e me ritenne
di qua dal dolce stil novo ch' i'odo!
Io veggio ben come le vostre penne
di retro al dittator sen vanno strette.

[Yes brother, I see now . . . the knot
that kept back the Notary, Guittone and me
from achieving the sweet new style!
I well see how your pens follow
behind the dictates of love, and go straight.]

(XXIV, 55-59)

Dante has put not only the description of the "sweet new style" into the mouth of Bonagiunta but also the admission that he and his mentor, Guittone, were unable to produce this new verse. The Notaro to which he refers is Giacomo da Lentini, one of the most important poets of the Sicilian school. The knot that kept back Bonagiunta and the others was in part the special stilnovo conception of love. But is was also the understanding of the relation between this conception of love and the specific elements of style in the poems: diction, rhetorical devices, patterns, literary forms.

The use of language itself is one example of this relationship. With regard to language Dante is critical of Guittone, and by implication his followers, in De vulgari eloquentia:

. . . famosos quamplures viros . . . puta Guictonem Aretinum, qui numquam se ad curiale vulgare direxit.

> [. . . several famous men . . . for example Guittone d'Arezzo, who never went directly to cultivated speech.][6]

Dante regards Guittone as having produced an ornate poetry at the cost of a sensitive use of refined Italian, Tuscan speech. Instead Guittone's verse has many Latinisms, Provençalisms and colloquialisms from his native city of Arezzo, "il volgare municipale." This emphasis on the purity of language is not a grammarian's rigidity or a kind of linguistic nationalism but rather reflects Dante's belief and that of the _stilnovisti_ that if language is to express feeling that is indigenous to the poet and his society, it must be the true native language.

That this poetry of the _stil novo_ has its linguistic roots in the language of the people can be illustrated when we contrast it with the verse that Guittone wrote late in his career. These later poems are only meant to be read and not sung as is the verse of the troubadours which Guittone was imitating. This split between oral and written traditions seems, in part, due to the bookish use of rhetorical devices. The _dolce stil novo_ is a return to a closer association between the felt, the sung and the written as is dramatically suggested by Dante early in the _Purgatorio_. In Canto II the Italian pilgrim meets Casella, a well known Florentine musician and vocalist, who sings one of Dante's _canzone_, "Amor che nella mente mi ragiona." This poem from the _Convivio_, by arousing

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[6] A. Marigo and P.G. Ricci, edd. (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1968), I, xiii, 1. All references to this work are from this edition.

in the exiled Dante and other listeners a great and spellbound nostalgia for home, illustrates the closeness of the vernacular literature to the heart of the people, their music and language.

Another implication in Dante's words to Bonagiunta is the claim that he, and the other stilnovisti have a complex knowledge of the nature of love. Here is the fourth level of Dante's meaning: their poetry is inspired by divine love. The obtruse nature of the verse is due to learning and intelligence but also to a spiritual insight. For his part Bonagiunta indicates that he now recognizes this source of the poets' inspiration:

> Io veggio ben come le vostre penne
> di retro al dittator sen vanno strette.

Earlier Dante had described love as his dictator (II, 52-54), and himself as love's scribe. This special inspiration of love is the "nodo" that prevented Guittone and Bonagiunta from achieving the dolce stil novo. On one level the love that dictates within is that of the heart and mind, but on another level it is the "Spiritus qui est Deus caritas" of St. Augustine. One can apply to Guinizelli, Cavalcanti and Dante the words which the latter uses for Moses and David:

> Quamquam scribe divini eloquii multi sint, unicus tamen dictator est Deus, qui beneplacitum suum nobis per multorum calamos explicare dignatus est.[7]

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[7] Monarchia, ed. P.G. Ricci (Milano: A. Mondadori, 1965), III, iv, 11.

Like the biblical authors, the poets of the stil novo follow the dictates of divine love. The dittatore is the Holy Spirit, the divine personification of love. This complex inspiration is due to a spiritual vision, a vision that is translated into poetic language of dense expression. The esoteric vision that lies behind the poems of the dolce stil novo constitutes the difficult movement towards perfection, the gradual ascent of the soul towards God. With stilnovisti, as later with Scève, the art of poetry is in pursuit of "l'object de plus haute vertu."[8] The second level, the aesthetic demands of the poetry, becomes a means of reaching perfection in art, a movement which parallels the direction in the other two levels: human love and divine love.

It is in the light of these earlier cantos in the Purgatorio that we must understand the later scene in which Dante meets Guinizelli. It is obvious that, quite apart from the dramatic value of these scenes to the movement of the Purgatorio, Dante uses them as a kind of commentary on his own lyric verse. When Dante meets Guinizelli he acknowledges his contribution to the stilnovisti with the words:

> . . . il padre
> Mio, e delli altri miei miglior, che mai
> Rime d'amore usar dolci e leggiadre.

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[8] As the subtitle that Scève gave to Délie it suggests the nature and direction of his poetic pursuit.

[. . . the father
To me and to others better than me, that ever
Used sweet and exquisite rimes of love.]
(XXVI, 97-99)

Dante thus points out that Guinizelli is the initiator and master of the "rime d'amore . . . dolci" and that Dante himself and others are followers of the new style. The name "padre" suggests that it is more than a new school of writing but rather a spiritual union of authors with a particular knowledge and similar view of love. This spiritual bond is all the more significant when we remember that Dante has repeatedly used the appellation "dolce padre," for Virgil, the Latin poet and his guide in the Commedia. To emphasize the importance of Italian as a literary tongue Dante has placed a contemporary vernacular poet on the same level as the great Latin author.

This metaphor of the family of language and poetry is extended by Guinizelli who, in response to Dante's words, praises Arnaut Daniel and introduces the Provençal troubadour with the famous words

fu miglior fabbro del parlar materno.
[he is the better maker of the mother tongue.]
(XXVI, 117)

In the Purgatorio Dante has Arnaut's spirit reply in eight lines of Provençal verse with an allusion to Arnaut's canso, "En cest sonet

coind'e leri."[9] In addition to this explicit and implicit compliment to the vernacular verse of Provence Dante has favourable words for Arnaut in De vulgari eloquentia where he quotes him as a model for vernacular love poets and says that he has imitated him.[10]

The Vita Nuova

These scenes from the Purgatorio are the last passages in Dante's writing in which he comments on his early lyric verse. In the Vita Nuova, on the other hand, Dante makes his earliest statements about the nature of literary devices in poetry. Much of the prose commentary in the Vita Nuova is devoted to explaining (1) the events and emotions which led the poet to compose each poem and (2) the structural parts of the poems in terms of the content. Thus the sonnet, "Amor e 'l cor gentil sono una cosa," is divided into its parts, octave and sestet.[11] Each in turn is divided

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[9] In the Purgatorio the verse, "Ieu sui Arnaut, que plor e vau cantan," is a reference to his poem which ends with the lines:

Ieu sui Arnautz au'amas l'aura,
E chatz la lebre ab lo bou
E nadi contra suberna.

in Anthology of the Provençal Troubadours, edd. R.T. Hill and T.G. Bergin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 101-02.

[10] See II, VI, X and XIII.

[11] Vita Nuova, pp. 66-67.

according to the argument of the poem. While this rather mechanical analysis of the parts of the poem may be designed by Dante to aid other poets with their own writing, it also gives us an idea of the Italian poet's process of composition.

It seems that Dante formulates the thought and argument of a poem before putting it into a metrical form. For Dante, as for the other stilnovisti, the content of a poem and its logical arrangement into a form is most important. The poem does not "write itself," one line leading to the next by association, rhetoric or rhyme.

The significant poems of the stil novo are intellectually disciplined, orderly and not overly rhetorical. As we will see, Cavalcanti's "Donna me prega," is mathematically symmetrical. It is a canzone that can be appreciated as a kind of verbal abstract art, since only a superficial understanding of the poem's meaning can be made clear. Nevertheless it is also a lyric that demonstrates emotion and sensitivity to the sound of language. Beyond a verbal construct and a piece of expressive writing, Cavalcanti's canzone is a complex philosophical discussion on the nature of love.

This line of reasoning may lead us to the view that, for the stilnovisti, the form of a poem is a kind of rhetorical shell into which the poet puts content and affect. This is not far from the Mediaeval view of rhetoric that Dante presents in the Vita Nuova. In chapter XXV the poet gives us a brief history of vernacular love

poetry, and ends with an explanation of personification and allegory. Regarding the use of these figures of speech Dante writes:

> Quelli che rimano deono parlare così non avendo alcuno ragionamento in loro di quello che dicono; però che grande vergongna sarebbe a colui che rimasse cose sotto vesta di figura o di colore rettorico, e poscia, domandato, non sapesse denudare le sue parole da cotale vesta, in guisa che avessero verace intendimento. E questo mio primo amico e io ne sapemo bene di quelli che così rimano stoltamente.
>
> [Those who compose in rhyme (vernacular poets) should not write in this manner without having a good reason for what they say. It would be a great disgrace for those who compose in rhymes to place things under the cover of figures of speech or the colours of rhetoric, and on being asked to explain, could not divest the words of such covering so as to reveal a true meaning. My first friend (Cavalcanti) and I well know a number of authors who rhyme in this foolish manner.][12]

Dante's explanation of the use of rhetorical devices in poetry separates style from content in the naïve manner that treatises on the art of poetry have traditionally done. It is a case of simplification for the sake of teaching a point. Dante here is trying to emphasize the disciplined process of composition

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[12] Vita Nuova, p. 94. The translation is mine.

with due regard for both the stylistic and the ideational components of a poem.[13] Rhetorical devices such as personification should not be used simply for decorative effect, with no other justification for the meaning of the poem. Dante and Cavalcanti feel that an author should be able to analyze his own poems in the elementary fashion that Dante has explained the content and parts of his lyrics throughout the Vita Nuova, but this exercise in no way exhausts the meaning of Dante's poems.

With the reference to "mio primo amico," Cavalcanti, Dante suggests that this highly systematic manner of composition is the one followed by himself and the other stilnovisti. Other contemporary poets try to imitate this kind of poetry but produce only the rhetorical appearances.

In this chapter on composition from the Vita Nuova we have the basis of a contrast between the classical poet and the modern poet. According to Dante the author of a work should be aware of the tradition in which he is writing and of the nature of the forms which he is using. Thus Dante briefly traces the development of the vernacular love lyric to show why he is using the figure personifying love in his poems. Dante sees himself and the

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[13] This separation can be seen in Cicero as well as in Quintilian, Isidore of Seville and Dante's "Letter to Can Grande." See P. Boyde, "Tropes," in Dante's Style in His Lyric Poetry (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 107-54.

stilnovisti as working within a tradition. The forms of the poems and the subject matter are part of that tradition. Even though for Dante's time the tradition of vernacular love poetry was, as he says, little more than 150 years old, the author sees it as a continuation of the forms and themes of Greek and Latin poets. The examples he uses to justify the use of personification are from these poets: Virgil, Lucan, Horace, Homer and Ovid. Dante suggests that the poet writing in the classical tradition is conscious of this background and of all the elements in his poetry.

The poet writing in the modern tradition is not obliged to be aware of the remote past. He may choose, but he is not required, to adopt specific forms, rhetorical devices, subject matter. The modern author need not be aware of every element of his work. He may compose in a traditional manner or he may proceed by random association of words and images. The poem may seem to write itself; one line flowing from the other by a process of association, rhetoric or rhythm.

This question has been examined by Paul Zumthor who explains the difference between mediaeval and modern verse in terms of context.[14] For Zumthor the mediaeval poet is writing within a tradition, but one which has a direct effect on the verbal nature

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[14] "Poésie médiévale et poésie moderne," Cahiers du Sud, No. 372 (1963), 270-82.

of the work. That is, the poem, in a sense, is viewed as incomplete outside of its literary context. The genesis, survival and growth of the poem are dependent on its tradition. According to Zumthor, the survival and growth of a work are not only mental but may also be physical. That is, there can be verbal variation in a poem, words can be added, or lost, the work can be translated or adapted and still it will exist as a literary text. The integrity of the text relies on the literary context.

These observations can be applied to the poems from the stil novo. As Contini has remarked, there is a kind of collaboration among the stilnovisti.[15] An understanding of Cavalcanti's "Donna me prega" depends on an analysis of Guinizelli's "Al cor gentil." The significance of Dante's "Le dolci rime d'amor" in turn relies on both these previous canzoni. It seems with each of these three poems, as with Dante's "Amor e il cor gentil," and "Donne ch'avete intelleto d'amore," that standing alone the single canzone is incomplete. A reader cannot arrive at an adequate understanding of the individual poem without a knowledge of its literary context: the stil novo and the troubadours. This inaccessible nature of the individual poem is part of its hermetic quality. The poem is closed; the key to the knot of its meaning lies in the literary context.

According to Zumthor, the modern poem is viewed in a different way. The growth of a modern work stops with the act of

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[15] "Introduzione," Rime, p. xii.

creation itself; and its survival depends on print not on a literary context. The poet places the words in an unchangeable order on the page. If the words are changed, translated or re-arranged it would be a different work.[16] This verbal fixity is assured by the accuracy of the modern print media. In these terms, while tradition may be relevant to an understanding of part of a modern work it is not necessary either to its full meaning or its survival. The modern poem is viewed, often mistakenly, as an independent entity.

Despite Eliot's pronouncements in "Tradition and the Individual Talent,"[17] some readers still regard his poems as products of a thoroughly modern sensibility. We should remember that Four Quartets, while in the symbolist tradition of modern verse, is also in the much older line of learned, hermetic poetry.

De vulgari eloquentia

In this Latin treatise on vernacular writing Dante presents, in the most explicit manner, his final views on contemporary literary works and their historical context, the literary traditions which he has inherited. As a defense of the popular art of vernacular poetry the Latin treatise is an example of Dante performing in his public capacity. In terms of the dolce stil novo

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[16] In a later chapter we will see Dante's concern with exact wording, a quality more common in the modern poet.

[17] Selected Essays, pp. 13-22.

two aspects of the De vulgari eloquentia are of note here. First, the treatise views Dante and the stilnovisti as very much part of the contemporary literary scene. Second, it re-affirms, in a much more elaborate way, Dante's views of literary tradition, as suggested in the Vita Nuova.

In the works looked at so far Dante implies a distinction between the poets of the dolce stil novo and their contemporaries. Dante has Bonagiunta suggest that their poetry is strikingly new. In the Vita Nuova the younger Dante speaks of "matera nuova e più nobile che la passata." But in De vulgari eloquentia no separation is made or implied; rather the opposite seems to be the case. The poems of Cavalcanti, Guinizelli and Cino da Pistoia are referred to along with those of troubadours, Sicilian poets and other Tuscan authors. In Book II Dante discusses models of the canzone form and cites as examples the poems of Girantz de Borneill, Folquetz de Marselha, Arnaut Daniel, Aimerics de Belenoi, Guido delle Colonne (Sicilian poet), Guinizelli, Cavalcanti, Cino and "l'amico suo," that is Dante (II, vi, 6).

One of the most significant aspects of De vulgari eloquentia is its view of the continuum of European poetry from classical authors to vernacular poets. A major object of Dante's treatise is to show how the principles of rhetoric from this earlier literature can reasonably be applied to vernacular Italian poetry. This is done systematically by examining elements of style

and using several references or quotations to prove the argument. Thus the above list of authors is followed by the observation that they have benefited from the example of Virgil, Ovid, Statius and Lucan (II, vi, 7).

Tradition is the central focus of Dante's Latin treatise. Tradition is also the basis of its major argument. The best literary works can only be produced by following the examples inherited "dignitatis auctoritas" (II, x, 5). The poetry of the stil novo may appear new to Dante's contemporaries, but, in fact, it is written in the best ancient tradition, a tradition forgotten or neglected by these same contemporaries. The severest criticism in the De vulgari eloquentia is directed at Dante's more prominent contemporaries:

> Subsistant igitur ingorantie sectatores Guictonem Aretinum et quosdam alios extollentes, numquam in vocabuli atque constructione plebescere desuetos.
>
> [Let the followers of ignorance, therefore, cease to praise Guittone d'Arezzo and certain others, who in diction and in construction have not lost the habit of imitating the plebian manner.] (II, vi, 8)

The ignorance here is not only with regard to the immediate literary context but also the models from tradition. To Dante the writing of the dolce stil novo, while a reaction to contemporary trends is, in truth, a return to the high standards of the best

authors. In terms of the hermetic qualities of the poems too we must consider the place of the literary context and tradition.

CHAPTER IV

GUINIZELLI: HEIR TO THE TRADITION

The *dolce stil novo* was founded on the intellectual and aesthetic ideals shared by the leading members of the group: Guinizelli, Cavalcanti and Dante. As indicated in the *Purgatorio*, it was given impetus by a strong reaction against Guittone and his followers. The first poet of the group, Guido Guinizelli, produced verse which deals with an idealized form of love, a sentiment which was first made conspicuous in literature by the poets of Provence about a century before the Bolognese versifier produced his *canzoni*. The *dolce stil novo* is very much a continuation of the Provençal tradition of love poetry, and as Dante has argued, viewed itself rather than the Guittoniani as the true heir and interpreter to the poetry of the *parlar materno*. In the doctrinal poems of the group

there is a conscious move away from Guittone's school and in general an attempt to exclude outsiders, those versifiers not chosen to carry on the true poetic tradition. Guinizelli's major poetic statement, "Al cor gentil rempaira sempre amore," is a graphic example of these tendencies. This canzone also demonstrates how the hermetic poet makes use of the stil novo literary context and the larger poetic tradition.

"Al cor gentil rempaira sempre amore," the most famous of Guinizelli's canzone, is called his "canzone dottrinale" and is often considered one of the doctrinal poems of the dolce stil novo. Thus this lyric corresponds to and has elements in common with Cavalcanti's "Donna me prega" and Dante's "Donne ch' avete intelleto d'amore," and "Amor e il cor gentil sono una cosa."

Guinizelli's canzone while appearing simple and straightforward on the surface is nevertheless a complex poem. The difficulty of the poem is indicated, to some extent, by the fact that even Italian scholars must resort to a paraphrase before they can intelligently comment on its meaning and style. The first ten lines indicate its complexity:

Al cor gentil rempaira sempre amore
come l'ausello in selva a la verdura;
né fe' amor anti che gentil core,
né gentil core anti ch' amor, natura:
ch' adesso con' fu 'l sole,
sì tosto lo splendore fu lucente,
né fu davanti 'l sole;
e prende amore in gentilezza loco
così propiamente

come calore in clarità di foco.
[Love always returns to the noble heart
As in the forest, the bird shelters in the greenery;
Neither was love created before the noble heart
By nature, nor the noble heart before love.
In the same manner when the sun was created
Immediately the splendor of its light appeared.
Nor was there light before the sun.
And love resides in the noble place
In such a natural manner
As heat in the flame of a fire.][1]

Guinizelli's diction is quite simple but such terms as "gentil" have a special meaning that is difficult to translate, or paraphrase. "Gentil" is "noble" in English, but it means noble of spirit, virtuous. Even today, an Italian dictionary will first give "gentile" the meaning that Guinizelli was trying to change, "nobile di nascita" and its second definition, "in senso morale, di sentimenti elevati, nobili, delicati." Through the instrument of the poem Guinizelli is attempting to reform the "parlar materno"; the canzone is to reshape the language, it is to give these words, and therefore ideas and forms of behaviour, a new significance.

This canzone is a very successful example of a poem that has captured both thought and feeling and combined them stylistically with apparent simplicity of language. The poem puts forth

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[1] "Al cor gentil repaira sempre amore," in Gianfranco Contini, ed., Poeti del Duecento (Milano: Ricciardi, 1960), vol. 2, pp. 460-64. The translation is mine. See Appendix A for the complete canzone.

four ideas: that nobility of heart, gentilezza, is due to natural virtue and moral sense and not to birth or social position; that nobility of spirit is necessary for the existence of love; that love consists in our virtuous behaviour and thus in our spiritual elevation; and that, therefore, the lady is, in a sense, an angelic being that is a means of spiritual transcendence for the lover.

These themes are not original to Guinizelli but are part of the literary tradition which he inherited. We find these ideas scattered in the vernacular poetry of Provence, Sicily and Tuscany. The concept that true nobility is not an hereditary characteristic but the result of virtuous behaviour is found in Guittone's poem to Jacopo da Leona, "Comune perta fa comun dolore."[2] A commonplace of love poetry, the wounded heart, the eyes being the means of this wound, is found in Italy as early as Giacomo da Lentini. The motif of the lady as an angel also appears in Giacomo's Sicilian sonnet, "Io m'aggio posto in core a Dio servire." The scene of the lover's soul standing before God might have been suggested by the tenso of the Provençal, Lo Monge de Montaudon, "L'autrier fuy en paradis." Even the almost mundane images taken from the physical sciences, which seem so spontaneous and occasional, have antecedents in the

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[2] The Italian poems are in Contini's Poeti del Duecento, vol. 1, the Provençal poems are in R.T. Hill and T.G. Bergin, edd., Anthology of the Provençal Troubadours, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

Sicilian lawyer, Guido delle Colonne. His canzone, "Ancor che l'aigua per lo foco lassi," uses the illustrations of fire, water, snow and wind to affirm that human love is a natural inclination.

The poem is a hermetic work which defies the most elaborate explanations. Ultimately the meaning of gentilezza remains incomplete. Only by exhausting the Provençal tradition and the stil novo context can the reader arrive at some partial understanding of the poet's views on love and gentility of spirit.

A modern reader of Italian has the advantages of centuries of scholarship in Provençal poetry, mediaeval and Renaissance Italian literature. He must use these to read the poem. A reader in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, while he might have the benefit of familiarity with the immediate literary context and the recent poetic tradition, is nevertheless excluded by the canzone's apparent simplicity of expression. This hypothetical reader would have been accustomed to the writing of Guittone and his followers whose verse employed verbal ornateness: Latinisms, colloquialisms, religious allusions, Provençal and French idioms, mannered expressions and proverbs. Compared to the laboured complexity of Guittone's "De coralmente amor non dimagra," or "Gente noiosa e villana," Guinizelli's canzone reads as if it were a superficial love ballad.

In Guinizelli's canzone it is not clear whether the simple diction is intended to deceive the uninitiated reader or is

primarily part of the poet's language reform. There is basis for maintaining both explanations. Because of the language the ideals expressed in the poem appear naïve. But this is not the case upon closer examination.

One of Guinizelli's achievements in "Al cor gentil" is that this is the first time that all the disparate themes of the tradition have been collected and inter-related into one coherent view of love and convincingly expressed in one poem. These commonplaces that had become the lifeless stock of his contemporaries are given a new depth of meaning by being co-ordinated into one flowing poetic expression.

In terms of the dolce stil novo Guinizelli's most significant achievement in this poem is his formulation of the basic theory of love that was adopted by the poets of the group. "Al cor gentil" is the first time in literature that a poet has made an unequivocal link between, on one side, the psychological relation of love and gentility of spirit and, on the other side, the interaction between the potential and the actual. All these ideas are in the literary tradition, but Guinizelli looks at the literary and tries to make it literal. The sincerity of the poet's effort is reflected in the simple yet cultivated language. Guinizelli takes the gallant metaphor of the angelic Lady and makes it a serious concept of his theory of love.

> Dir li potrò: tenea d'angel sembianza
> che fosse del tu' regno;
> non mi fu fallo, s'eo li posi amanza.

[My soul can answer Him, "My Lady resembles an angel
From your own kingdom
I was not in error if I placed my love in her."]
(ll. 58-60)

If the lover is to be elevated spiritually by means of love then the mediator, the Lady, must have an angelic aspect. Human love resembles divine love; as the man strives for spiritual perfection he moves towards God. When Guinizelli draws a parallel between the influence of God on the angelic spheres and that of the Lady on the lover, he is not being hyperbolic in the way that we may think. Since the poet elevates human love in a religious sense, the parallel stands.

The poet's argument also works in subtler ways. Into the mouth of God the poet puts the words, "a Me conven le laude / e a la reina del regname degno." God has elevated a human being, the Virgin Mary, to his level in terms of meriting human praise. The Queen of Heaven is a woman worthy of the love and praise due only to God. She is a mediator between God and man and as the mother of Christ she is instrumental in man's salvation. When, two lines later, the poet suggests that another woman reminded him of God's angels and made him love, he is saying that she too is instrumental in drawing him to God, like Mary.

Guinizelli has begun to reconcile the incompatibility that existed at this time between ideal love for a woman and the religious doctrine of love. The resolution to this harmonizing

movement is found not in Aquinas but in Dante's Beatrice in La Divina Commedia.[3]

For Guinizelli the philosophical and theological background for this mystical resolution can be found in his native city of Bologna. The university in this city was active in the teaching of Thomistic theology and Avicenna in medicine. Both figures were associated with Averroes and the revival of Aristotelianism. But the probable influence for the use of light images in the poem along with the analogy of the celestial spheres is Bonaventura. The theological school in Bologna at this time was governed by a Franciscan, Bartolomeo da Bologna, who had authored a book, De luce, on Bonaventura's mystical ideas on light.

The poet's conviction as to the truth of his ideas on love is demonstrated by the ease with which he moves from one to the other in the poem. These concepts are self-evident to Guinizelli and are demonstrated not by dialectic arguments but by artless analogies from the natural sciences: physics, chemistry and astronomy. The action and nature of love is as axiomatic to the poet as the behaviour of the bird, the sun, the stars, fire, water, precious stones and mud. The sincerity of his faith is reflected in the seeming simplicity of his language.

All the themes of the poem are united smoothly into one argument. The apparent lack of sophistication of the poem, and the impression of clarity of expression is due not just to the plain

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[3] See A.E. Quaglio, "La Canzone dottrinale di Guinizelli," in Lo Stilnovo e la poesia religiosa (Bari: Laterza, 1971), pp. 47-52.

diction but to the poet's use of a number of devices of repetition. These devices help to develop and unify the parts of the argument in an inconspicuous manner and give the poem the rhythm of a song.

The first three stanzas are a tautologia, the same basic idea, that love resides in the gentle heart, is repeated in different words. And since this thought is repeated and demonstrated by many different illustrations from nature: the bird, the sun, fire precious stones, the star, the torch, the stanzas also demonstrate the device of exergasia.

The first four stanzas are ordered by the use of ploce. The repetition of the phrase, "gentil cor" in lines 1, 3, 4, 11, 14, 19 and 21 acquires additional significance with each repetition. The abstract idea, gentilezza, is made more tangible with the concrete illustrations of the "gentil cor," as a nest, the sun, a fire, a mine and finally that quality which makes a virtuous man a noble lover. The ideal of gentilezza, spiritual elevation demonstrated by social refinements, is emphasized by commoratio. It is repeated several times in different words: "gentil cor," "gentil cosa" and "gentil valore." The language of the people is used to explain the mysterious notions of the philosophers.

These devices of repetition give the poem the surface simplicity of a song and remind us of the troubadour's canso. This is evident in the device of anadiplosis or coblas capfinidas, as it would be called in Provence. With this device the last

important word in one stanza is repeated, in some form at the beginning of the next stanza. All but the last stanza of Guinizelli's canzone are joined by this echo device. Thus line 10 ends with "foco" which begins line 11; line 20, "innamura," line 21, "Amor"; line 30 "ferro," line 31 "Ferre"; line 40 "splendore," line 41, "splende." The device is not used in the last stanza in order to separate it from the rest of the poem as the dramatic conclusion to the lyric.

On the surface level then, "Al cor gentil" can be enjoyed as a song. On a second level it can be paraphrased in terms of the philosophical ideas. A tentative definition of "gentilezza" can be used and parallels can be drawn with other poems, Provençal and stilnovista. But full comprehension escapes us. Even within the context of the dolce stil novo the canzone is left incomplete. A clue to this is given in the structure and patterns described above. While these patterns seem to be the traditional repetitive arrangements of a song, they also have aspects of word play or an intentional verbal construct produced for communicative and aesthetic purposes. As such the canzone becomes a piece of abstract art masquerading as a love song. The repetitive pattern of sound and word symbols, "gentilezza," has meaning in addition to the philosophical and didactic thrust of the poem. The calculated recurrence of the forms "cor gentil," "amor," and variations of these produces a symbolic effect. This pattern of duplication in

lines: 1, 3, 4, 8, 11, 14, 19, 20, 21, 26, 28, 33, 34, 36, 38, 46 (beato), 49, 54, and 60 (the final word on the last line), forms a statement in itself. The result is that Guinizelli has produced a poem within a poem.

It is these aesthetic aspects of love and private communication that seem to be part of the dolce stil novo doctrine. This abstract third level of meaning is not as manifest in this canzone as in Cavalcanti's "Donna me prega." However, as we shall see in the next chapter, because of the close doctrinal link between the two canzoni there is good justification for suggesting the third level of meaning.

The style of the canzone, the imagery, the rhetorical devices, the structure of the argument, show the "razionalità" of the poet at work. But the force of the poem is not cold logic, scholastic speculation or theological doctrine. Rather its strength lies in the firm personal conviction of the speaker and the sincerity and apparent artlessness with which he communicates this assurance in his native speech. This is evident in the final stanza. The poet's defence before the judgement seat of God is that since the Lady seemed like an angel from heaven, he was not in error to love her. This is no rhetorical trick flippantly placed at the end of the poem for effect. If it were the poem would be absurd. This defence is not simple hyperbole. Rather it is a sign of belief, on the poet's part, in the power and nature of love as

he has demonstrated it in the rest of the poem. The force of the canzone is in its feeling, a feeling which transcends the rhetorical devices and unifies the whole song. The poet does not convince us with dialectic but with his poet's skill in using his lingua Italiana.

Guinizelli's canzone had a profound influence on later poets as is evident by the manner in which the poem is continually echoed in other works. Dante has Francesca da Rimini refer to it in the Inferno, "Amor, ch' al cor gentil ratto s'apprende" (V, 100). And in the Earthly Paradise Beatrice describes the quality and the action of love and the image of the Creator in the virtue of the Beloved (Purgatorio XXXI, 22-24). This expression of the final goal of love is a justification for the final argument of Guinizelli's poem.

In addition to Guinizelli's effect on Cavalcanti and the other stilnovisti, there are also some verbal parallels in Petrarch. Though with its paradoxes, antitheses and oxymorons Petrarch's verse is quite different from the stilnovisti, the purity of the refined language which he inherited is still apparent in his lyrics. The famous sonnet CXC, "Una candida cerva sopra l'erba" is a fine example of verbal lucidity as is sonnet VIII, "A pie' de' colli ove la bella vesta" or canzone CXXVI, "Chiare, fresche et dolci acque."

When European Petrarchism became preoccupied with the rhetorical devices of the Italian poet's imitable style, it forgot

both the ethos of *fin' amors* and the refinements of language that were behind the ideal of love and behaviour. Nevertheless, the poems of Guinizelli and the *dolce stil novo* are one of the great achievements in European literature and remain examples of excellence to anyone interested in the *migliori fabbri del parlar materno*.[4]

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[4] For another interpretation of Guinizelli's *canzone* see Mario Marti, "Sperimentalismo Guinizzelliano," in *Storia dello stil novo* (Lecce: Milella, 1973), vol. 2, pp. 349-76.

CHAPTER V

CAVALCANTI: THE DISQUIETING POET

In his commentary on Guido Cavalcanti's "Donna me prega" Ezra Pound makes some striking observations:

> The following canzone was known as "the philosophic canzone"; the stir that it caused, over and above the stir aroused by any beautiful work, may be attributed in part to the state of philosophic opinion in and about A.D. 1290. Guido is called a "natural philosopher," I think an "atheist," and certainly an "Epicurean," not that anyone had then any clear idea or has now any very definite notion of what Epicurus taught. But a natural philosopher was a much less safe person than a "moral philosopher."
>
> It is not so much what Guido says in the poem, as the familiarity that he shows with dangerous thinking; <u>natural demonstration</u> and the proof by experience or (?) experiment. If after-dinner talk of the Uberti and

> Cavalcanti was any warrant for Guido's tone it is small wonder that Dante who was, as a young man, bien pensant, and probably quite content with the orthodoxy of Guinicello, thought it necessary to lodge the tough-minded seniors of these tribes in the Tenth Canto of his Inferno, where indeed, the elder Cavalcanti might seem to be expecting his son.[1]

In this thought-provoking essay Pound tries to reconstruct the intellectual climate of Cavalcanti's time, and in this way interpret the canzone. Pound's fifty page study is a good example of the problems faced when reading hermetic poetry. While the American-Italian poet has examined the available manuscripts of the poem, studied all of Cavalcanti's extant work, assembled relevant philosophical information, and produced an excellent English translation of "Donna me prega," he frankly admits:

> BUT THE POEM IS VERY OBSCURE. . . .
>
> Considering the clarity and precision of the text where it is clear, I am loth to think that these obscure points indicate merely a loose usage or remplissage, on the part of the author.[2]

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[1] "Cavalcanti: Medievalism," in Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, ed. T.S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1968), p. 158. The essay first appeared in Make It New (1934) but can be dated 1910-31.

[2] Ibid., p. 159.

This is the paradox of the hermetic poem: it can be enjoyed on the literal level as a sophisticated love song; it can be interpreted and even translated. But all three of these activities are only partial views of the poem. They all involve reducing the work to one level. In both interpretation and translation decisions must be made as to how certain lines are to be read. Ambiguities are given one meaning or omitted. The results are incomplete paraphrases of the poem.

In Cavalcanti's canzone difficult words, phrases and passages cannot be explained as oversights on the part of the poet. His precision with the language of his lyric suggests control and purpose. In addition to this craft and artistic intent Cavalcanti seems to have a firm understanding of the philosophical ideas he is trying to convey in his canzone. It is left up to the reader to study the text closely. To do this the modern reader needs commentaries to guide him. But Pound has observed

> . . . there are certain enigmas, and the celebrated commentators have done nothing to solve them. These which face us today are precisely the same ones which faced Del Garbo in 1302 or 1320 or Di Giunta in 1527.[3]

After considering Cavalcanti's connections with Robert Grosseteste and Arabic philosophy, and speculating on other influences such as Roger Bacon, Pound concludes

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[3] Ibid., p. 159.

> As the philosophy of the time has been completely scrapped, there are very few specialists who can help us. I should be glad to hear from anyone who has more definite knowledge. Up to the present I have found out what I have found out by concentration on the text, and not by reading commentators, and I strongly suspect that is the road the next man will have to follow.[4]

There is some justification for Pound's cynical remarks on the usefulness of commentaries for "Donna me prega." Scholars have little doubt of Cavalcanti's complete mastery of the canzone's style as well as his grasp of the philosophical ideas upon which it is based. However there is a good deal of contention over what exactly these ideas are, their source and the resulting interpretation of the poem.

In the 1320's the physician, Dino del Garbo, produced a Latin commentary on "Donna me prega" in which he interpreted Cavalcanti's love as a passion of sense with no intellectual or ideal aspects. During the Renaissance several commentators disputed over this view. Jacopo Mini considered it ideal love; Marsilio Ficino, amor celeste and vulgare; Girolamo Frachetta, sensual and rational; while Franco Vieri and Paolo del Rosso viewed it as purely carnal love.[5]

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[4] Ibid., p. 162.

[5] O. Bird, "The 'Canzone d'Amore' of Cavalcanti According to the Commentary of Dino del Garbo. Text and Commentary," Mediaeval Studies, II (1940), 150-203 and III (1941), 117-60.

In this century the German philologist, Karl Vossler, supports the work of G. Salvadori (1895), and maintains that "Donna me prega" demonstrates the influence of mediaeval Arab philosophers.[6] In his study J.E. Shaw bases his detailed interpretation of the canzone on the thought of Albertus Magnus and, to some extent, Arab-Christian Platonism.[7] Despite the arguments of Shaw's book his views are dismissed by A.E. Quaglio with a summary "del tutto isolata resta la discutibile proposta di J.E. Shaw. . . ."[8] The Thomistic understanding of Cavalcanti's canzone has found favour with M. Casella[9] and with Guido Favati who also sees Cavalcanti as a Neo-Aristotelian.[10] For the last

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6 Mediaeval Culture: An Introduction to Dante and His Times, trans. W.C. Lawton (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1929), vol. 2, pp. 81-156.

7 Guido Cavalcanti's Theory of Love: The "Canzone d'Amore" and Other Related Problems (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1949).

8 Quaglio and E. Pasquini, Lo Stilnovo e la poesia religiosa (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1971), p. 145.

9 "La Canzone d'amore di Guido Cavalcanti," Studi di Filologia Italiana, 7 (1944), 97-106.

10 "La Canzone d'amore del Cavalcanti," Letterature moderne, 3 (1952), pp. 422-53. See also "Introduzione" in Guido Cavalcanti: Le Rime (Milano-Napoli: Riccardo-Riccardi Editore, 1957).

thirty years by means of numerous books and articles Bruno Nardi has argued against all of these interpretations and has repeatedly maintained that there is but one major source for Cavalcanti's philosophical ideas, Averroes.[11] It should be noted that Pound also considered the canzone's Averroism. Despite the attacks by Favati, the strength of Nardi's arguments has won several supporters. The most notable is Mario Marti whose recent two volume work, Storia dello stil novo, follows Nardi's interpretation and evaluates his work on Cavalcanti in the following terms:

> Il Nardi, individuando le strutture generali della canzone, sottolinea in questa trama di affermazioni taluni fondamentali principi dell'averroismo (eternità e incorruttibilità dell'intelletto possibile; anima sensitiva come entelechia del corpo) e una concezione dell'amore rispondente alle più cavalcantiane tra le rime del Cavalcanti. L'intera canzone acquista in tal modo coerenza e chiarezza, là dove la tematica poetica tradizionale (origine, natura, effetti d'amore) viene sublimata e coagulata intorno ad un nucleo di pensiero, che rinvigorisce e rinnova radicalmente il linguaggio, attribuendogli una sconosciuta tensione semantica, insomma una verità nuova e un nuovo sentimento. Essa

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11 "L'averrismo del 'primo amico' di Dante," in Dante e la cultura medievale (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1942), pp. 93-129 and "Noterella polemica sull'averrismo di Guido Cavalcanti," Rassegna di Filosofia, 3 (1954), 47-71.

> in tal modo viene a costituire effettivamente il documento più significante della poetica cavalcantiana. . . .[12]

Averroes or Thomas Aquinas? It is in the nature of hermetic verse to leave some questions unresolved. Many poems arouse critical controversy over their meaning. While this may often be a necessary condition it is not a sufficient one for classifying this difficult verse. In hermetic poetry the obscurity is not due to simple deficiencies on the part of learned readers, but is inherent in the work itself. The ambiguity and different levels of meaning are the result of a dense style.

When dealing with this obscure kind of verse literary scholars often appear mystified. Despite expertise and confidence in their methodology the hermetic poem eludes them. J.E. Shaw, for example, as knowledgeable and meticulous as he is in examining the writing of Dante and the stil novo,[13] seems unable to deal with parts of "Donna me prega." His commentary on Cavalcanti's work begins, in effect, with stanza two, the stanza which best demonstrates the presumed influence of Albertus Magnus. Shaw's explication of stanza one consists of a few general remarks on the poet's views of love, a summary of the eight questions posed and an explanation for using Albertus Magnus as Cavalcanti's

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[12] (Lecce: Edizioni Milella, 1973), vol. 2, p. 393.

[13] Essays on the Vita Nuova (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1929).

philosophical mentor.[14] As we will see this crucial first stanza contains a number of terms which must be dealt with before a reader can proceed to the rest of the canzone. In this respect these key words in the lyric are to be treated as if they were from another language. At the end of his history of the stil novo Mario Marti includes an indice analitico, a kind of cross-reference glossary. Though by no means definitive it is useful in understanding many of the difficult terms from adorare and amore to zaffiro.[15]

A close examination of Cavalcanti's canzone reveals that, while it is in the tradition that Guinizelli inherited from Provence, it is in many ways a different work. Even the visual arrangement of the poem on the page suggests Cavalcanti's individualism and inimitable craftsmanship. In the Laurenziano manuscript the first stanza appears as follows:

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[14] Guido Cavalcanti's Theory of Love, pp. 9-16.

[15] Op. cit., pp. 575-96.

DONNA mi priegha
perch' i volglio dire
D'un accidente
che sovente
é fero
Ed é sí altero
ch'é chiamato amore

SICCHE chi l negha
possa il ver sentire
Ond a 'l presente
chonoscente
chero
Perch i no spero
ch om di basso chore

ATAL ragione portj chonoscenza
Chè senza
natural dimostramento
Non o talento
di voler provare
Laove nascie e chì lo fá criare

E QUAL è sua virtu e sua potenza
L'essenza
e poi ciaschun suo movimento
E 'l piacimento
che 'l fá dire amare
E se hom per veder lo puó mostrare:—[16]

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[16] This is the manuscript which Pound reprints in his essay, "Cavalcanti: Medievalism," pp. 163-167. See Appendix B for the complete canzone. All references to Cavalcanti's work will be from G. Contini, Poeti del Duecento, vol. 2.

The pattern in this first stanza is repeated in the other four. Since the initial impression is a visual one many questions arise. Is the pattern meant to have a particular effect? What is the purpose of the design and its relation to the topic of the poem, the nature of amore? Is this an implied relationship between philosophic truth and artistic beauty? Is this visual aspect of the poem Cavalcanti's way of pointing out a unique (if not perfect) work which he knows can never be duplicated?

The pattern looks so playful and easy that it is misleading since the canzone is a serious work on a difficult subject. Indeed Cavalcanti seems to be trying to give the impression of playing with the words of his lyric. With what could be called disprezzatura he is challenging the reader with his display of virtuosity. As we will see, this implicit challenge is repeated twice in the body of the canzone (ll. 5-7 and 74-75). It is the challenge of the hermetic poem:

> Ed a presente — conoscente — chero
> . . . . . .
> a tal ragione porti canoscenza.

The reader is warned to abandon all hope unless he is conoscente and possesses canoscenza of the poet's ragione.

This mediaeval example of concrete poetry is in fact a conventional lyric in the tradition of fin' amors: a definition

poem. Guinizelli's "Al cor gentil" is a poetic definition of gentilezza; Cavalcanti's "Donna me prega" deals with the most difficult subject of the dolce stil novo, amore. While Guinizelli's canzone is built on a loose structure of repetition and rhetorical devices which redefine gentilezza in a series of musical elaborations, Cavalcanti's poem follows a strict argumentative pattern. The first stanza lists the difficult questions that the poet undertakes to answer with the help of natural dimostramento, natural philosophy, the proof of physical experience, as opposed to philosophical speculation. Cavalcanti investigates eight questions: (1) Where does amore abide? (2) Who begets it? (3) What is the nature of amore? (4) What is its power? (5) What is its essence? (6) What are its actions? (7) What is the service that gives it the name of amore, and (8) can amore be made visible to the eyes?

In the next four stanzas two each of these questions are answered in the following manner:

Stanza 2, the origins of amore, and its first perfection

Stanza 3, the ethical nature of amore, and the force of amore, desire for the good

Stanza 4, the second perfection of amore, and its effect as passion

Stanza 5, the passage from the first perfection to the second, and the results of amore with both perfections

Congedo, an address to the canzone and its mission.

If Guinizelli is the stilnovista of feeling, Cavalcanti is the poet of razionalità as evidenced by the argumentative strategy and formal logic of the canzone. As we will see in the next chapter this structure of a scholastic disputation is the one followed by Dante in his "Canzone Terza." The answers that Cavalcanti provides for each question are not those we might expect from Guinizelli. Cavalcanti takes the reader further into the psychology of human love. The answer to the first question, "là dove posa [?]" is not simply, "il cor gentil" but,

> In that part where memory is,
> love takes its place,
> formed there as a mist of light
> on the darkness that comes from Mars' influence.
> Love is created and its name
> denotes a sensible passion.
> It takes its form from the soul
> and its will from the heart.[17]

The complexity of this answer leaves us puzzled. The poet is on another level of experience, and assumes that the reader has his knowledge and experience of the nature of love and human psychology. The poet is not interested in communicating with anyone not versed

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[17] My translation here is literal and a simplification of the Italian. See Appendix C for Ezra Pound's translation.

in the knowledge of love. This hermetic attitude is explicitly stated in the opening stanza:

> Ed a presente — conoscente —chero,
> perch'io no spero — ch'om di basso core
> a tal ragione porti canoscenza:
> chè senza — natural dimostramento
> non ho talento — di voler provare
> là dove posa, e chi lo fa creare.
> (ll. 5-10)[18]

The conoscente is a person acquainted with the methods of science, natural dimostramento. This person is not one "di basso core" but has Guinizelli's "cor gentil." In this context of scientific learning Cavalcanti has expanded the meaning of core so that it signifies heart, soul, but also mind. Since one of the major concerns of the canzone is with the intellect and its relationship with feeling and memory, it is fitting that the poet demand a reader with both nobility of soul and learning. Cavalcanti has thus limited his audience to but a few people outside the dolce stil novo circle.

The word "conoscente" is emphasized by its final place in the second series of internal rhymes which begin on line 2, "accidente," "sovente," and continue on line 5, "presente,"

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[18] Contini and some modern editions of the canzone indicate the internal rhymes by use of dashes.

"conoscente." These internal rhymes lead us to what Pound calls "the other dimension of the poem . . . its lyricism."[19] Before we pursue the philosophical dimensions of the canzone let us consider its more technical aspects. Cavalcanti's lyrics, the poetry of the stilnovo and of Provence were composed to be sung. The practice of repeating a rhyme scheme from stanza to stanza is of Provençal origin. Like a musical composition the Italian canzone re-echoes a symmetrical pattern. As Dante explains in De vulgari eloquentia the canzone is a specialized genre characterized by formal limits.[20] In Cavalcanti's "Donna me prega" the Italian canzone reaches a high degree of lyrical perfection.

Cavalcanti's stanza consists of four parts. The first two parts are duplicates of one another in number and arrangement of lines and rhyme pattern. The last two parts echo each other in similar fashion. The intricacy of Cavalcanti's skill becomes manifest when we see that each stanza is articulated by fourteen terminal and twelve internal rhymes. This means that in each of the fourteen line stanzas fifty-two of every 154 syllables (more than one-third) are bound into recurrent patterns. This musical symmetry becomes visually apparent in the Laurenziano manuscript of the poem. The third stanza of this version is shown below with

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[19] Op. cit., p. 163.

[20] Op. cit., II, ix, 4-6; xi, 1-13; xii, 2-9.

the appropriate rhyme table:

NON é virtute	a	part 1
mà da questa vene	B	
Perfezione	c	
ches si pone	c	
tale	D	
Non razionale	d	
mà che si sente dicho	E	
FUOR di salute	a	part 2
giudichar mantene	B	
E l antenzione	c	
per ragione	c	
vale	D	
Discerne male	d	
in chui é vizio amicho	E	
DI sua virtu seghue ispesso morte	F	part 3
Se forte	f	
la virtú fosse impedita	G	
La quale aita	g	
la contrara via	H	
Nonche opposito natural sia	H	
MA quanto che da ben perfett e torte	F	part 4
Per sorte	f	
non po dir om ch abbi vita	G	
Che stabilita	g	
non a singnioria	H	
A simil puó valer quant uom l obblia:—	H	

The tightness of the interlocking pattern repeated in each stanza is indicated when we note that of the twenty-six rhyme words, twenty are in groups of four (c, d, f, g, h), and six in groups of two (a, b, e). Thus, in addition to the formidable logic of the poet, the canzone is unified by this exceptional density of rhymes. Cavalcanti's success is all the more remarkable since the entire poem is written in the traditional hendecasyllabic line (generally eleven syllables).

Considered only as a metrical achievement this canzone is one of the most complex poems in European literature. But it is more than a mediaeval "Coup de dés," more than a memorable performance in musical rhyme patterns. While sustaining his metrical arrangement through seventy-five lines Cavalcanti is able to create a complex philosophical poem structured as an argument on a difficult philosophical and psychological topic, amore.

In order to follow his demanding rhyme scheme the Italian poet is restricted in his choice of words. This limitation is reflected in the condensed manner of expression. Nevertheless Cavalcanti seems to be able to select the words he desires and only these terms. Within the straightforward question and answer strategy which defines amore there is little room for repetition, digression or lyrical hyperbole. The diction of the poem is confined to the essentials of the discussion. This, it should be noted, is one of the outstanding stylistic features of the dolce

stil novo in its move away from the ornamental style of the Guittone school. This purity of diction is an ideal of the stilnovisti which is often attempted but not often achieved. "Donna me prega" is the high point of this stil novo ideal.

Since the style must be concise, each word in the poem bears a heavy burden of meaning. The terms: accidente, amore, conoscente, core, ragione, natural dimostramento, talento, canoscenza, provare, posa, creare, vertute, potenza, essenza, movimento, piacimento and mostrare (to take only the first stanza) are used in such a terse manner as to presuppose that the reader has a significant degree of sophistication with current natural philosophy, literary tradition and possibly theology. The style is so succinct that these seventeen terms constitute one fifth of the words in this stanza.

To investigate these terms and their meaning for Cavalcanti's conception of amore involves a major study in mediaeval philosophy. The eleventh word in the poem, accidente, takes us to the consideration of the Platonic, Aristotelian and Thomistic concepts which distinguish between substance and accident. This is a very old and complex problem in philosophy and leads to discussions of semantics, logic, physics and metaphysics.

In the opening lines of "Donna me prega" Cavalcanti categorizes amore as an accident rather than a substance, that is, it exists not as an entity in itself but as a quality attributable to an object.

. . . voglio dire
d'un accidente — che sovente — e fero
ed e si altero — ch' è chiamato amore.
(ll. 1-3)

At this point some commentators mention the substance-accident dichotomy in passing and concentrate instead on Cavalcanti's nominalist allusions, "ch' è chiamato amore," and later, "che 'l fa dire amare" (l. 13). This is a reference to a pseudo etymology for the word, amore, which holds that it is composed of "a" and "more" connoting death.[21] The fact that Cavalcanti calls amore "fero," cruel, and "altero," haughty, suggests that he is referring to this tradition of amore and morte, but it is more an indication of temperament on the poet's part than a firm intellectual conviction. Does the poet want the reader to be concerned with the name, amore? I think not. The allusion is a way of pointing out and dismissing a false etymology which serves only to confuse investigations into the nature of amore. The poet's methodology is natural dimostramento not fallacious speculation based on accidents of name or rhetorical hyperbole.

The important term in the passage is accidente. What is the nature of amore as a quality? The stilnovisti were concerned

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[21] Works in this topos are Guittone's sonnet, "Amor dogliosa morte si pò dire," and the canzone, "O tu, de nome Amor, guerra de fatto," and Federigo dall'Ambra's sonnet, "Amor che tutte cose signoreggia," in Contini, Poeti del duecento.

with this question. Guinizelli approached it obliquely in his discussion of gentilezza in "Al cor gentil." Dante demonstrates a preoccupation with the problem in the Commedia and in the lyrics mentioned in these chapters. In the Vita Nuova he explains amore as an accidente:

> . . . io dico d'Amore come se fosse una cosa per sè, e non solamente sustanzia intelligente, ma si come fosse sustanzia corporale: la quale cosa, secondo la veritate, è falsa; chè Amore non è per sè come sustanzia, ma è uno accidente in sustanzia. (XXV, 1)

The substance-accident dichotomy raises questions about the interpretation of the poem. The dichotomy appears in the writing of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas and the Arab commentators of Aristotle such as Averroes. Which version applies to Cavalcanti's "Donna me prega?"

For Plato substance is identified with the essence of an object. Since he is primarily concerned with investigating the being of things from the standpoint of their intelligibility his dialectic aims at a knowledge of the essential nature of objects. Science, however, is knowledge of universals so the essence of things considered as intelligible is the universal common to many, that is, universal form or idea.[22] Is Cavalcanti's essenza of

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[22] Lysis, 217 and Cratylus, 439 in The Collected Dialogues of Plato, edd. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961).

love the same as Plato's universal?

Aristotle goes beyond this Platonic concept and investigates the being of things from the standpoint of their generation and existence. Cavalcanti too examines amore "là dove posa, e chi lo fa creare." Since only individual things are generated and exist, for Aristotle substance is primarily the individual thingness which unlike the universal is not communicable to everyone. In the Metaphysics he develops the concept of substantia prima which is not the matter alone, nor the universal form common to many, but the individual unity of matter and form. Substantia prima is the being and unity which an object has over and above the sum of its parts.[23]

In stanza two Cavalcanti seems to be following Aristotle's concept of form:

> Vèn da veduta forma che s'intende,
> che prende — nel possibile intelletto,
> come in subietto, — loco e dimoranza.
> (ll. 21-23)

Amore comes from veduta forma, which is both concrete matter and abstract form rendered intelligible. The possibile intelletto is subject to the form. We are reminded of Guinizelli's interpretation

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[23] Metaphysics, Book Z, ch. 17, in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941). See also Catagoriae, ch. 5.

of love and perception in "Al cor gentil." However Cavalcanti goes beyond this idealized love to explore the reality of the erotic, flesh and blood as well as intellect. The psychological dynamics of "Donna me prega" seem to be based on the Aristotelian model of the relationships between form and intellect, and matter and essence. Some knowledge of Aristotle's work would seem to be necessary in order to begin to understand the poem.

"Guido is eclectic, he swallows none of his authors whole."[24] No one philosophical tradition seems to satisfy Cavalcanti's needs. The canzone associates the terms, vertute, potenza, essenza and movimento which may be alluding to these concepts in the writing of Aquinas. Substance in its secondary sense, substansia secunda, is universal form, idea, or species which is individuated in each thing. Thomas Aquinas developed this later concept of substance in his treatise on Aristotle's Metaphysics. This is not an elaboration of quiddities but a discussion of the distinction between potentiality and actuality which leads to the nature of essence and existence in finite things. Aquinas' thesis means that within a real thing, that by which it is what it is does not itself achieve complete reality.[25] Only with God is such act-of-being, esse,

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[24] Pound, p. 159.

[25] Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle, trans. J.P. Rowan (Chicago: Henry Regency Co., 1961). See also De Ente et Essentia in Aquinas on Being and Essence, trans. Joseph Bobik (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965).

identical with essence. In "Donna me prega," however, there is no clear religious element.

Cavalcanti seems to be more interested in flesh and blood feeling. The poet is attempting to deal with the conflict that arises between the ideal contemplation of the lady and the actual passion. Aside from the philosophical presuppositions inherent in the canzone, one of the aspects of its complexity is due to the terse manner in which it refers to this struggle in the mind of the poet. The conflict is not obvious. The philosophical language and the formal purity of the lyric tend to hide this subjective dimension, but it is there. At the beginning of stanza two Cavalcanti claims that amore dwells "In quella parte dove sta memora. . . ." The memory here is the sensitive faculty since in stanza three we are told, "Non razionale — ma che sente. . . ." However, J.E. Shaw points out that it is both intellectual and sensitive. In citing Albertus Magnus' views in De Anima, De Memoria and De Homine Shaw explains:

> When, therefore, Cavalcanti identifies a part of the soul as "that part where memory is," he must mean by "memory" the sensitive memory. The sensitive memory, however, is also intellectual per accidens, inasmuch as it preserves representations of the abstract ideas received by the intellect. These representations are not themselves abstract concepts. . . .[26]

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[26] Guido Cavalcanti's Theory of Love, p. 17.

This conflict between concrete experience and abstract ideal underlies the argument of the canzone. It is a conflict the poet never resolved. "Perch'i' no spero di tornar giammai."

These are the bare outlines of the concepts behind Cavalcanti's view of amore as accidente and how they are related to the dynamics of human psychology. While still in the tradition of fin' amors, the treatment of love is an unconventional one for love poetry. The concern with natural demostramento, the experiential and concrete, the use of conceptual terminology and the analysis of intellect and feeling make "Donna me prega" a unique poetic study in erotic-intellectual love.

Cavalcanti has moved away from the idealism of Guinizelli and takes poetry closer to the reality of human psychology. J.E. Shaw makes this final observation on Cavalcanti's verse:

> Cavalcanti's Love is not consciously religious or moral. It is not recognized as an aspiration to the highest good, but it is a thoroughly human affection. Born of imaginative intellectuality, the nobility of the human soul (the anima nobilis is produced by the Intellectual Light from the First Cause, the "lome" from which Love comes), it becomes a passion of body and soul for a real woman, in which the Supreme Good ("buon perfetto") is forgotten. This passion is destructive and often disastrous, and the mind of the poet broods with tender melancholy over the impossibility, demonstrated again and again by experience, of holding permanently the temporary realization of his ideal.[27]

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[27] Guido Cavalcanti's Theory of Love, p. 123.

"Donna me prega" is meant for the élite, anyone who can appreciate Cavalcanti's ragione. The poet ends his canzone with the declaration of the hermetic poet. Having finished his lyric he addresses his song to

> le persone — c'hanno intendimento,
> di star con l'altre tu non hai talento.
> (ll. 74-75)

CHAPTER VI

DANTE'S "CANZONE TERZA": THE *CONVIVIO* OF COMPLEXITY

This examination of Dante's lyric verse will look at one poem that comes near the end of the development of the *dolce stil novo*. Dante's "Canzone Terza" is the third and last poem in the *Convivio*.[1] Though the *Convivio* remains unfinished after the commentary to this *canzone*, Dante scholars are fairly sure that some of the poet's other lyrics were also intended for this work. Dante himself tells us in the introduction to the work

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[1] Dante Alighieri, *Il Convivio*, ed. G. Busnelli e G. Vandelli (Florence: Le Monnier, 1934-37); 2nd ed. with appendix by A.E. Quaglio, 1964-68, parte II, pp. 3-7. All quotations for the *Convivio* are from this edition. See Appendix D for complete *canzone*.

(I, i, 102-05) that it is to contain fourteen canzoni followed by commentaries. Each poem is to examine a different topic. The "Canzone Terza" deals with gentilezza. Canzone LXXXIII, "Poscia ch'Amor del tutto m'ha lasciato," is considered a work planned for the Convivio.[2] Like the "Canzone Terza" it too is a definition poem, but on the quality of leggiadria. Thematically the two canzoni are linked since their respective definitions are related to the code of values of fin' amors. Even though there is no proof that Dante intended it for the Convivio, Canzone LXXXIII forms part of the context of the "Canzone Terza," both in terms of Dante's lyrics and in the wider literary tradition.

Aside from the single problem of historically reconstructing Dante's plans for the rest of the Convivio, the "Canzone Terza" is a complex poem from three points of view: (1) the poem itself; (2) the poem and its commentary; and (3) the poem in its wider literary context. The argument of this chapter is that the "Canzone Terza" is a piece of hermetic verse, a complex poem not accessible to the general reading public. Despite Dante's intentions to use the poem as a simple means of instruction, it remains a lyric of the dolce stil novo.

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[2] The Roman numbering is the one established by Michele Barbi and Francesco Maggini, edd. Rime della Vita Nuova e della giovinezza (Florence: Le Monnier, 1956). In Bardi, "Canzone Terza" is LXXXII.

Before we examine the poem from this hermetic point of view let us place it within the chronology of Dante's life and major works.[3]

The "Canzone Terza" marks several significant changes in Dante's poetic career; changes which can be briefly outlined in the following manner: (1) Unlike Dante's other lyrics this canzone is emphatically didactic. As a consequence it is a piece of argumentation; a poem tending towards a philosophical treatise on gentilezza. (2) While the canzone thematically echoes Guinizelli's "Al cor gentil," it is a dramatic departure from this and its other forerunners in style and subject matter. (3) Guinizelli wrote for an élite group which was interested in a particularly esoteric form of love poetry. But the intended audience in Dante's canzone is a wider reading public. (4) This canzone is placed in the Convivio, the first important defence of vernacular writing,

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[3] A chart can best illustrate this.

YEAR	WORK OR EVENT	DANTE'S AGE
1265	Traditional date of Dante's birth	
1280's	Dante begins to write poems in Italian	
1290	Death of Beatrice	25
1292-93	Vita Nuova, collection of earlier lyrics	
1295-96	"Canzone Terza," other lyrics written	early 30's
1300	Fictional date of Commedia journey	35
1306-08	Convivio, collection of lyrics	41
1309	De vulgari eloquentia, Commedia begun	
1321	Dante's death in Ravenna	56

written in Italian. Unlike the De vulgari eloquentia, written in Latin, the Convivio is meant for a wider audience. (5) Unlike the other two canzone in the Convivio, and many of Dante's lyrics, which have their meaning veiled in allegory, the "Canzone Terza" is in a relatively plain style. (6) In contrast to the Vita Nuova, a collection of introspective verse on the personal emotions and conflicts of love and meant for a small, intimate audience, the Convivio deals with many topics of general concern. The "Canzone Terza" in effect deals with the question of nobility of soul, and with human perfection as it concerns everyone in their social life. One could venture to say that with this poem Dante is moving away from the immediately personal Vita Nuova and towards the social and moral concerns of the Commedia. (7) In the accompanying commentary of the Convivio Dante explains the ideas in the canzone in great detail. He defends his arguments, cites examples and quotes authorities. The commentary, however, is not a line by line gloss. As a learned analysis of the poem it assumes a certain knowledge and understanding on the part of the reader. At the same time such elaborate explanations (the "Trattato Quarto" for the "Canzone Terza" is over eighty pages long) implies revelation of that which is not known, or readily accessible. There is, then, a problem of ambiguity between the poet's stated intentions of simplicity and the developed complexity of the poem.

The introductory stanza, or proemio, of the "Canzone Terza" clearly gives us the poet's intentions.

Le dolci rime d'amor ch' i' solia
cercar ne' miei pensieri,
convien ch' io lasci; non perch' io non speri
ad esse ritornare,
ma perchè li atti disdegnosi e feri
che ne la donna mia
sono appariti m' han chiusa la via
de l' usato parlare.
E poi che tempo mi par d'aspettare,
diporrò giù lo mio soave stile,
ch' i' ho tenuto nel trattar d'amore;
e dirò del valore,
per lo qual veramente omo è gentile,
con rima aspr' e sottile;
riprovando 'l giudicio falso e vile
di quei che voglion che di gentilezza
sia principio ricchezza.
E, cominciando, chiamo quel signore
ch' a la mia donna ne li occhi dimora,
per ch' ella di se stessa s'innamora.[4]

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[4] This is my English paraphrase of the first stanza.

The sweet verses of love which I was accustomed
to seek out in my thoughts,
I must now lay aside; not because I do not hope
to return to them,
but because the proud and hard manners
that in my lady
have become apparent, have closed the way
of my usual speech.
And so, since it is time for waiting
I will lay down that sweet style of mine

The poet's subject is valore or gentilezza; his style, "rima aspr' e sottile." Some of his reasons for writing the poem are: to compensate for the lady's change of attitude, to teach the true notion of gentilezza, and to refute false notions of this quality.

a. Style as indicated in the canzone

The phrase "dolci rime" in line one refers to Dante's poems of the dolce stil novo. These verses are written in "mio soave stile" (l. 10), a manner appropriate to love poetry. This style is in contrast to the "aspro stile" of argumentative verse as the verses of the proemio imply. With regard to style the poet uses the phrase "l' usato parlar" (l. 8) which refers to the usual form of speech not only of stil novo, "mio soave stile," but also the allegorical form of writing verse.[5] The two earlier canzoni of the

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which I used in writing of love,
and I will speak of valore,
by which man is truly noble,
with harsh and subtle rhymes;
refuting the false and base opinion
of those who maintain that gentilezza
is principally wealth.
Thus beginning, I call on that lord
that dwells in my lady's eyes
since she is in love with herself.

[5] Robert Hollander, Allegory in Dante's Commedia (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 12-56 discusses the allegory of mediaeval grammarians and rhetoricians as defined by Isidore of Seville, alieniloquium, or "otherspeech."

Convivio: "Voi che 'ntendendo il terzo ciel movete," and "Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona," are the direct antecedents of this reference, and are allegorical. The poet declares that he will lay aside this form of writing. In the "Trattato Quarto" Dante explains:

> E però che in questa canzone s'intese a rimedio cosi necessario, non era buono sotto alcuna figura parlare, ma conveniesi per via tostana questa medicina. . . . Non sarà dunque mestiere ne la esposizione di costei alcuna allegoria aprire, ma solamente la sentenza secondo la lettera ragionare. (Con., IV, i, 10-11)

Because the poet's purpose is didactic, or as he puts it, medicinal, in this poem everything must be stated clearly and directly, no veil of allegory, no figura.[6] We shall see later what poetic and rhetorical devices Dante, in fact, does use in the poem.

The poet's declared intentions here are significant in terms of what Dante and Mediaeval poets understood as the nature of poetry and allegory. In "Trattato Secondo" of the Convivio we are told about the second sense or meaning of a poem, "L'altro si chiama allegorico, e questo è quello che si nasconde sotto 'l manto di queste favole, ed è una veritade ascosa sotto bella menzongna. . ." (Con., II, i, 3). In contrast to this view Dante is

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[6] See Erich Auerbach, "Figura" in Scenes from the Drama of European Literature, trans. R. Manheim (New York: Meridian Books Inc., 1959).

saying that his purpose and style in "Canzone Terza" are unpoetical by the standards accepted by the authors of his time.[7]

In line 14 the poet states that he will use "rima aspr' e sottile" in order to teach the truth about gentilezza. Superficially speaking aspro refers to the harsh, aural quality of verse suitable for argumentation (just as its opposite, dolce, is appropriate for love poetry); sottile is intellectual, a quality of the content, the materia. For the benefit of his readers Dante explains the phrase in this simple manner:

> E però dice aspra quanto al suono de lo dittato, che a tanta materia non conviene essere leno; e dice sottile quanto a la sentenza de le parole, che sottilmente argumentando e disputando procedano.
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> (Con., IV, ii, 13)

But this does not make it clear what the distinction is in practice between dolce and aspro, since this canzone seems to be as much part of the love poetry of the dolce stil novo as any other of the major poems of this school.

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[7] See G. Boccaccio, Geneologia deorum gentilium, liber XIV, c. 9-13, in which he defends this view of poetry, "Credere poetas nil sensisse sub cortice fabularum. . . ." See also Isidore of Seville, Etymologiae, I:40 and Vincent of Beauvais, Speculum doctrinale, I, 3, c. 109.

b. The problem of style

The distinction here cannot be simply that of the aural quality of this canzone since the sound of the verses is as compatible to love as those of Dante's other love lyrics. The important thing to notice here is that "aspr' e sottile" are paired together. Aspro literally means bitter, acerbic tasting. By extension aspro has come to be applied to sound and voice qualities; for example, a strident voice, a harsh sound. Aspro is also used to mean rough, as in rough, rocky terrain. Dante himself used it to describe the dark wood, "esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte" (Inferno, I:4). A figurative meaning is "difficult" as in, "l'aspro camino della virtù"; the difficult path of virtue. Sottile literally means thin or thinner than is usually the case with an object, for example filo sottile, thin or fine thread, aria sottile, thin or rarefied air. The figurative meaning is fine, acute, refined. The word has roots in the craft of weaving. In Latin subtilis is derived from the locution sub tela, under the weave. It refers to a thinner thread worked into or under the regular weave of a fabric. From this understanding of the word we can venture to say that while Dante is not writing, as he puts it, "sotto alcuna figura," he is writing sub tela, under the fabric of the words as well as with the surface pattern.

The two words, "aspr' e sottile," then, from different perspectives, both connote difficulty. The verses are going to be

difficult to understand. The materia of the canzone, the nature of gentilezza, is a complex idea. By means of the canzone and the commentary, the poet is trying to explain his insight into gentilezza to a wide readership. The commentary, however, does not fully explain this understanding of, "aspr' e sottile." While poets of the stil novo would be aware of these meanings and distinctions, other readers would not. The disparity between Dante's concise wording in the canzone and the unclear phrasing in the commentary may be due, in part, to the length of time (ten years) between the composition of the canzone and the later gloss in the trattato.

The distinction between aspro and dolce is not simply a difference in harmonious sound but a variation in style. The more direct style of "aspr' e sottile" is difficult to understand since it makes demands on the reader.[8] In the compact phrasing of "la via tostana," a reader must comprehend not only the literal surface but the other meanings as well. The tightly written stanzas of Dante's canzone are in contrast to the more musical repetitions of Guinizelli's "Al cor gentil."

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[8] See M. Fabi Quintiliani, Institutionis Oratoriae, ed. M. Winterbottom (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), VIII, 6:62. Of compact, difficult writing he says, "Sit enim frequentissime aspera et dura et dissoluta et hians oratio. . . ." The effect on the reader is one of harshness. Keep in mind the phrase "aspera et dura" when we examine Scève's verse.

This interpretation can be arrived at from lines 10-16 of the canzone. The poet declares that he will put aside his dolce style and use his aspro style because he cannot now speak of love but must teach about gentilezza. According to classical rhetoric a change in topic, intention or audience involves a change in style. In his Orator, Cicero names the three officia of the author: "ut probet, ut delectet, ut flectat."[9] The three appropriate styles for these offices are: the plain, the tempered and the grand or ornate styles respectively. Since the poet's declared intention here is to teach, the style most appropriate is plain. In the stil novo school "aspr' e sottile" is the plain style, direct, compact, forceful. In his commentary Dante states that his didactic purpose is to be fulfilled by an appropriate style, "non era buono sotto alcuna figura parlare, ma conveniesi per via tostana," that is, the plain style.

c. The structure of a poetic definition

In "Canzone Terza" Dante at first uses the term valore to define gentilezza, natural nobility, that quality by which man is truly noble. In the commentary he explains:

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[9] M. Tulli Ciceronis, Orator, ed. Wilhelm Kroll (Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1961), 69. St. Augustine adapted these three officia but changed the first to ut doceat, De Doctrina Christiana, IV, ch. 12.

> Dico di dicere di quello "valore" per lo quale uomo è gentile veracemente. E avvegna che "valore" intendere si possa per più medi, qui si prende "valore" quasi potenza di natura, o vero bontade da quella data, si come di sotto si vedrà. (Con., IV, ii, 11)

The last part of this explanation can be paraphrased as ". . . valore natural potential, or true goodness, one which can be seen below the surface appearances." With the proemio of the canzone Dante begins his polemic against those who identify gentilezza with the appearances of wealth or ancient lineage.

The introductory stanza gives a brief plan for the rest of the canzone. The poet presents his arguments in a very logical manner. Each stanza follows the overall structure of a debate, rather than a symmetrical or musical arrangement. After the proemio of stanza one, the treatise of stanzas two to seven can be summarized in the following outline:

stanza 2, refutation of gentilezza as a trait of ancient wealth or fine manners
stanza 3, refutation of gentilezza and false notions of man's nature
stanza 4, refutation of gentilezza as noble origin or background
stanza 5, explanation of gentilezza, its true origin
stanza 6, explanation of gentilezza and virtue
stanza 7, explanation of gentilezza and the appearances of virtue.

The canzone concludes with stanza eight, the congedo which refers back to the proemio. By means of the stanzas the materia of the canzone is organized into topics. This follows the division of the parts of rhetoric according to Cicero's Topica: sixteen basic topics which can be used to separate the parts of an argument.[10]

The "Canzone Terza" is an attempt at defining the concept of gentilezza, a quality about which Dante makes specific statements as to what it is and what it is not.[11] But the very fact that the canzone is a paradiastole, an explicit statement of various meanings of the term gentilezza, gives the word and the poem other meanings. The form the rhetoric of the canzone follows is that of a procatalepsis, in which the poet anticipates and refutes the arguments of others against his view of gentilezza. After the proemio Dante begins his treatise by presenting the definition of gentilezza ascribed to Frederick II, and the popular corruption of this view. The second stanza opens with these words:

> Tale imperò che gentilezza volse,
> secondo 'l suo parere,
> che fosse antica possession d'avere
> con reggimenti belli; (ll. 21-24)

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[10] M. Tulli Ciceronis, Topica in Cicéron, Division de l'art oratoire, ed. H. Bornecque (Paris: Ed. Les Belles-Lettres, 1960).

[11] Patrick Boyde, Dante's Style in His Lyric Poetry (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 283 asserts that this is the only lyric in which Dante makes open use of the definition form.

The periphrasis, "Tale impero," which omits the name begins to diminish the imperial notion of gentilezza even before it is given.

The third stanza uses analogy to show how a definition can be defective. It begins:

> Chi diffinisce: "Omo è legno animato,"
> prima dice non vero,
> e, dopo 'l falso, parla non intero
> ma più forse non vede. (ll. 41-44)

and goes on to show how the emperor's notion and the popular definitions are faulty in several ways (ll. 45-73). In stanza 5 the poet distinguishes the concept of gentilezza from simple virtue. The logic of this stanza is difficult and the poet tries to make clear the stages of the argument by the repetition of "dico," lines 81, 83, and 89. This is the rhetorical figure of expeditio which tries to untangle the parts of an argument.

Later in the canzone, at the end of stanza 6, Dante gives his own definition of gentilezza.

> Che seme di felicità sia costa,
> messo da Dio ne l'anima ben posta.
> (ll. 119-20)

This cryptic statement has meaning only within the context of the other explanations and refutations. It is evident that Dante has applied modes of argument derived from his study of philosophy.

The structure of refutation and proof is typical of scholastic argumentation. Dialectics and rhetoric are closely associated in Dante's time. Within this rhetorical context this canzone, no longer of "alcuna figura," reaches additional levels of complexity. This intellectual complexity is demonstrated by the figures of enthymema, or rhetorical syllogisms in stanza 3 (ll. 56-58), and stanza 5 (ll. 69-73).

The body, or treatise, of the canzone is structured within an allegorical framework. The proemio ends with an invocation:

> E cominciando chiamo quel signore
> ch'a la mia donna ne li occhi dimora,
> per ch'ella di se stessa s'innamora.

The congedo echoes these words by addressing the canzone itself:

> Contra-li-erranti mia, tu te n'andrai;
> e quando tu sarai
> in parte dove sia la donna nostra,
> non le tenere il tuo mestier coverto:
> tu le puoi dir per certo:
> "Io vo parlando de l'amica vostra."
> (ll. 141-46)[12]

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[12] My English paraphrase for these lines is:

> My "Against-the-erring" off you go;
> and when you will be
> where our lady dwells,
> do not hide from her your mission:
> you can tell her with certainty:
> "I go speaking of your friend."

The donna here is a personification of philosophy. The signore that dwells in her eyes is truth (rather than love), and the amica of the donna is gentilezza. These verses are couched in the allegorical language of love poetry. In lines 5 and 6 the poet speaks of the "atti disdegnosi e feri" of his lady, philosophy, as other love poets have done with regard to women. In the second canzone of the Convivio, "Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona," Dante describes lady-philosophy as "fera e disdegnosa" (ll. 76). "Canzone Terza" which is to have "alcuna figura," has the allegory of personification presented through the conventions of love poetry. These complex literary figures are part of a tradition which includes Le Roman de la rose.* The figura of donna-filosofia has its source in the De Consolatio philosophiae of Boethius, and in the Bible.

These apostrophes to allegorical figures place the "Canzone Terza" in a context of rich associations, but as rhetorical devices they emphasize the frame of the canzone. The allegorical frame puts the canzone in the context of a philosophical discussion. The poetic definition of gentilezza which was to be a simplified explanation for the reader must now be looked at in terms of philosophy and allegory. The commentary expands on this metaphysical aspect of the poem by explaining certain complex phrases:

> Per ch' ella di se stessa s'innamora, però che essa filosofia . . . amoroso uso di sapienza, se medesima riguarda, quando apparisce la bellezza de li occhi

> suoi a lei; che altro non è a dire, se non che l'anima filosofante non solamente contempla essa veritade, ma ancora contempla lo suo contemplare medesimo e la bellezza di quello. . . .
>
> (Con., IV, ii, 18)

d. The Commentary

The commentary is literal and in prose, and explains the allegorical elements of the canzone. The elaborate glosses of the Convivio, in explicating many of the verses of the poem, also make their literal meaning more explicit. This is part of the teaching task of the poet. But the results are limited by the very nature of the prose commentary. In order to paraphrase the canzone the poet is compelled to simplify, to use the surface elements, the more obvious meanings that the reader can understand. The poet cannot communicate what is beyond the experience of the reader. The sub tela thread of meaning will escape the reader. Only such stilnovisti as Cavalcanti, Guinizelli or Cino, could grasp the full implications of lines, phrases, and figures. What does Dante mean by "valore," "la donna mia," and "aspr' e sottile"? In what contexts are we to understand these elements of the canzone?

With regard to the character of commentary Northrop Frye has observed: "It is not often realized that all commentary is allegorical interpretation, an attaching of ideas to the structure of poetic imagery."[13] Even without this wider sense of allegory,

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[13] Anatomy of Criticism, p. 89.

the commentary becomes part of the context of the poetic work. The prose adds explanation, background and authority to the poetic statement. As in Dante's earlier work, La Vita Nuova, the commentary forms a background against which the poetic expression is outlined and against which it can acquire new meanings, or, for some readers, limit its meanings.

The Convivio, like the Vita Nuova, uses a mixed genre form, a collection of poems with prose commentaries to interpret the verse. The form is not original to Dante. One of the works familiar to the Italian poet was De Consolatione Philosophiae of Boethius which uses a similar form.[14]

It is significant that in both the Vita Nuova and the Convivio Dante's intention is that the poems be read in the context of the commentary. Anthologies which collect Dante's lyrics and arrange them in some scholarly manner, such as the Bardi-Maggini edition, are in effect distortions of the poet's intentions. To the degree that they change the context of the poems they change their meanings.[15] Like many editions of Scève's Délie which print the

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[14] The early French chantefable, Aucassin et Nicolette, also follows a mixed genre form, songs and narration, though it is a romance rather than a treatise on a philosophical subject.

[15] In addition to the Bardi-Maggini edition, there is G. Contini, Dante Alighieri, Rime (Torino: Einaudi, 1947), G.R. Ceriello, Dante Alighieri, Rime (Milano: Rizzoli, 1952), and K. Foster and P. Boyde, eds., Dante's Lyric Poetry (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

poems but omit the fifty emblems, here too the context of the poems is changed; many juxtapositions, associations and meanings are lost.

e. The literary context and literary allusions

Dante's "Canzone Terza" is part of a literary tradition which has both distant roots and more immediate predecessors in terms of the poet's time. An ancient element is allegory. The canzone has an allegorical context in terms of its own structure, with regard to the other two canzoni of the Convivio and also as it alludes to the allegory of Boethius and the Bible. The immediate context is the dolce stil novo. The canzone makes a poetic statement about gentilezza as does Guinizelli's "Al cor gentil." The other major doctrinal poem of the stil novo is Cavalcanti's "Donna me prega," which contains the poet's theory of love. The "Canzone Terza" is part of the stil novo practice of defining and redefining the values of fin' amors.

In his paper, "Literature as Context: Milton's Lycidas," Northrop Frye observed that

> Every poem must be examined as a unity, but no poem is an isolatable unity. Every poem is inherently connected with other poems of its kind. . . . It is literature as an order of words, therefore, which forms the primary context of any given work of literary art.[16]

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[16] In Milton's Lycidas: The Tradition and the Poem, ed. C.A. Patrides (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), pp. 208-09.

Up to this point this study has only briefly touched on the wider context of Dante's canzone. Now it will look at the literary context of the poem as it is indicated in the text itself.

The wider context of the canzone can be seen in several references beginning with the title of the collection itself. Il Convivio means banquet, a metaphor which Dante uses throughout the introduction of the work (Con., I, i-v). Like convivio the term sumposion also means banquet. Plato's Symposium takes place at a banquet and is a discussion of the nature of love. By the title and banquet metaphor Dante wishes to draw attention to this tradition of philosophical discussion. In the introduction Dante tells us that we are to have food for the mind as well as for the body. Each canzone is a dish; the commentary is the bread (Con., I, i, 14).

In "Canzone Terza" lines 114 and 115 suggest that grace can elevate men and make them, "quasi dei," almost gods. Dante explains this reference by citing Aristotle's Ethics, vii, which gives us a scale of being for man from bestial to angelic (Con., IV, xx, 3). Following this the phrase, "tal grazia" brings the question of human perfection into a Christian context. From Aristotle and Plato in one line Dante takes us to St. Thomas in the next. Grazia, to Dante, is a quality of excellence in human nature. This intellectual principle which constitutes human nature has God as its immediate cause (Summa theologia, 1a, 90, 2-3). It is in this larger context of western man's search for human perfection, not just as an ideal,

but as a reachable goal, that the poets of the stil novo see gentilezza.

In addition to the subject, gentilezza, the canzone contains several allusions to other major poems of the stil novo. These poems, in turn, give the canzone a rich literary context. In lines 3 and 4 the words, "perch' io non speri / ad esse ritornare," is a clear echo of Cavalcanti's famous poem of exile, "Perch' i' no spero di tornar giammai." A significant parallel here is that Cavalcanti's poem is an apostrophe to the canzone itself in which he sends the song to his lady to speak to her, much as Dante has done in the congedo of "Canzone Terza." Cavalcanti ends his canzone on the word, valore, the subject of Dante's lyric.

The contrast between the two poems is also worthy of note. In his canzone Cavalcanti despairs of ever returning to see his lady: not only will exile prevent him but death as well. Dante, however, is speaking of returning not to his lady but to a style of love poetry, "le dolci rime." He knows that he will return to it, and by implication to his lady, because he is dedicating himself to filosofia, the way to wisdom, the way to human perfection and eventually to salvation.

The argument found on lines 38 to 40 contains the idea that the loss of reason is a kind of death. This notion had earlier been used by Cavalcanti in "Donna me prega" (ll. 35-42). A central notion in this difficult, intellectual canzone is that love is an

agency hostile to reason. In gentilezza however Dante sees the possibility of resolving Cavalcanti's dichotomy. The parallels in the two poems help highlight this difference in point of view. In his canzone Cavalcanti states that he will explain the qualities of amore (11. 10-14). Cavalcanti's syntax is in the following order:

> . . . eo voglio dire
> . . . . . .
> là dove posa, e chi lo fa creare,
> e qual sia sua vertute e sua potenza,
> l' essenza. . . .

With regard to gentilezza Dante echoes it closely:

> e dicer voglio omai, si com' io sento,
> che cosa è gentilezza, e da che vène,
> e dirò i segni che 'l gentile uom tene.
> (11, 78-80)

Dante's subject is not amore but gentilezza, nevertheless, the allusions make apparent that the poet sees a connection between the two. This relationship is the subject of the Convivio's "Canzone Seconda," "Amore che ne la mente mi ragiona." It is the subject of two lyrics in the Vita Nuova, "Donne ch' avete intelleto d'amore," and "Amor e 'l cor gentil sono una cosa." The interaction of amore and gentilezza are especially the concern of Guinizelli's "Al cor gentil rimpaira sempre amore." In "Canzone

Terza" there are two direct references to Guinizelli's poem. Lines 61 to 63 re-affirm the idea that gentilezza is the result not of noble birth but of natural quality. And lines 112 to 120 echo the view that God alone bestows gentilezza and that He gives it to individuals, not to families as such. Dante's definition of gentilezza is built on that of Guinizelli and argues against Cavalcanti's separation of love and reason. In this context Dante's "Canzone Terza" is the last major lyric of the stil novo. It is a re-affirmation, a culmination of the ideals of the school. But as a popularization of these ideals it seems to have failed since the simple lesson remains a complex work of art.

f. A commentary is a piece of writing in which we expose and seek to excuse our ignorance of the subject. The less we know, the longer our explanations.[17]

The "Canzone Terza" can be read for its aesthetic qualities: sound, rhythm, symmetrical patterns, imagery. Yet not only is understanding important in this poem but it is Dante's stated intention that the canzone teach about gentilezza. Neither re-reading nor the commentary take the reader far enough for clear interpretations of the canzone. Since Dante himself devoted over eighty pages of introductory commentary on this canzone, this study

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[17] Ezra Pound, "Cavalcanti: Medievalism," in Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, p. 158.

does not presume to have exhausted the meanings of the poem. In the future further attention will have to be given to the interpretations and implications of the "Canzone Terza."

CHAPTER VII

SCEVE: UNPETRARCHAN HERMETIC

> Petrarch throughout his several reworkings of his Canzoniere shows much influence of the dolce stil novo. . . . Through the influence of Petrarch, the conventions of the stil novo were spread throughout Europe and profoundly affected the development of lyric poetry in France, Spain, England and elsewhere. Lorenzo de' Medici, the reviver of Petrarchism for the Italian Quattrocento, consciously imitated the stil novo. . . .

This is the heritage of the dolce stil novo as summarized by Lewis H. Gordon in the Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics.[1] It is the traditional view of the relationship between the

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[1] Alex Preminger et al., edd. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 199.

stilnovisti and Petrarch. However one of the problems with Gordon's loose use of the word influence is that it implies similarities between the stilnovo poets and Petrarch and between these and later European love poets. But careful examination of these works indicates that the differences between the canzoni discussed here and those of Petrarch are significant. Gordon sees a direct line of development from the dolce stil novo poets through Petrarch to later European Petrarchism. In a general sense the tradition of courtly love in its most conventional and obvious manifestations did continue from Provençal authors through European Petrarchism down to Dante Gabriel Rossetti.[2] In Canadian verse Leonard Cohen with his extensive use of paradox, antithesis, oxymoron and hyperbole writes love poetry in this general tradition.

During this long span of time, however, the nature of the writing underwent several changes in outlook and style. Distinctions should be made between the different periods of literary history, Renaissance, baroque, classical and romantic. The effects of native literary traditions on the national variants of Petrarchism should be borne in mind. And most of all we must remain aware of the individuality of some outstanding authors. Maurice Scève is one of these individualistic writers.

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[2] Leonard Forster, The Icy Fire, traces Petrarchan literary devices such as antitheses and oxymoron to twentieth-century advertising copy-writers.

Within this sweeping view of European Petrarchism Scève has traditionally been classed as a French Petrarchan poet.[3] The Lyonnais poet's apparent Petrarchist qualities were placed beyond doubt when E. Parturier took the trouble to list each presumed borrowing not only from Petrarch but from other Italian Petrarchan authors such as Bembo, Serafino and even Lorenzo de' Medici whose Commento did not appear until 1554, ten years after Délie:

> La Délie est le plus obscur de tous les recueils pétrarquistes. On chercherait en vain, même en Italie, une poésie plus énigmatique, sauf peut-être quelques pièces particulièrement artificielles de Dante et de Pétrarque. Le commentaire qui, dans la présente édition, accompagne le texte, est le résultat de l'enquête que j'ai dû faire pour tenter de le comprendre, pour éclaircir les énigmes que sont un grand nombre de ces dizains. Je ne me flatte pas d'avoir retrouvé toutes les sources de la pensée de Scève, ni d'avoir compris toutes ses intentions.[4]

In his book, La Préciosité et les précieux, René Bray reclaims French Petrarchism for the native literary tradition by considering it as préciosité:

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[3] Joseph Vianey, Le Pétrarquisme en France au XVI[e] siècle, pp. 45-58.

[4] Délie (Paris: E. Droz, 1916), p. xiii.

> La dette des pétrarquistes français à l'égard de leurs devanciers italiens est donc assez diverse; ils empruntent des formes de versification, ce qui n'est pas sans importance . . . ils assimilent des habitudes de style et adaptent des images et des figures, ce qui est le propre de la préciosité pétrarquiste.[5]

To Bray the main tradition in France is préciosité of which Petrarchism is but one variation. This courant précieux is traced from Thibaut de Champagne to Giraudoux with Maurice Scève as one of the links in the chain. While Scève may appear as Petrarchan, Bray argues, he is in fact French précieux because Italian Petrarchism, "une imitation d'imitateurs" is borrowed from the Provençal tradition.

> Où les Italiens ont-ils trouvé les thèmes précieux dont ils ont usé, sinon chez les troubadours provençaux, chez les mêmes poètes de l'art clos qui se sont faits les maîtres des trouvères français? Que ce soit par Charitео et par Pétrarque ou par Charles d'Orléans et Thibaut de Champagne, c'est aux inventeurs du trobar clus que remonte Maurice Scève, à Rambaut d'Orange, à Giraut de Borneil, à ces aristocrates de la poésie hermétique qui ont illustré notre plus ancien lyrisme. Cependant l'auteur de Délie n'est pas le banal héritier d'une tradition.

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[5] "Platonisme et Pétrarquisme: Maurice Scève" (Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1946), p. 50.

> Son imagination s'empare des thèmes qu'on lui transmet, les adapte, les transforme, les enrichit.[6]

Under the stimulus of Italian Platonism and Petrarchism, Scève and other poets are seen as reviving native French préciosité. But the Italian movements have French roots and thus the external influence on Scève is seen as minimal.

> La chanson précieuse du XIII^{e} siècle chante les délices et les souffrances de l'amour courtois, la poésie précieuse du XVI^{e} vante l'amour platonique. Il est évident que l'un procède de l'autre. La Renaissance n'a point interrompu totalement le mouvement des idées et des sentiments. Les formes de vie médiévales se prolongent dans le monde moderne. Amour courtois, amour platonique, c'est toujours la même tendance vers une sorte d'intellectualisation du sentiment, qui permet justement l'apparition de la préciosité.[7]

The claims and counter claims for the origins of various aspects of the baroque style found in Petrarchan, précieux or metaphysical poetry can sometimes obscure the concept of a long tradition of verse which transcends linguistic boundaries. At several points in his book Bray refers to "la poésie hermétique,"

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[6] Bray, pp. 60-61.

[7] Bray, pp. 47-48. It is strange that Bray has little to say about the Grands Rhétoriqueurs tradition and its effects on Scève's verse.

and while he does not deal with it as a tradition he does consider aspects of Scève's obscurity:

> Le résultat de ce travail est conditionné par la forme adoptée: le dizain oblige le poète à condenser à l'extrême sa production. On aboutit ainsi assez fréquemment à une certaine obscurité. Mais cette obscurité n'est pas une imperfection: elle est voulue par l'auteur. La tradition de l'art clos la commande; de tout temps la philosophie a d'ailleurs tendu à se cacher sous le manteau de la poésie.[8]

Maurice Scève has been examined as Petrarchan, précieux and metaphysical, however it is more productive to consider his work in the international hermetic current since qualities in his verse go beyond either French or Italian literary traditions. In addition to this, Scève's use of woodcuts in Délie takes the work into the realm of the visual arts.

In Délie the 449 dizains are preceded by an introductory huitain which suggests the direction of Scève's verse.

A SA DELIE

> Non de Venus les ardentz estincelles,
> Et moins les traictz, desquelz Cupido tire:
> Mais bien les mortz, qu'en moy tu renouelles
> Ie t'ay voulu en cest Oeuure descrire.

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[8] Bray, pp. 64-65.

Je sçay asses, que tu y pourras lire
Mainte erreur, mesme en si durs Epygrammes:
Amour (pourtant) les me voyant escrire
En ta faueur, les passa par ses flammes.[9]

The poet directs Délie and the reader to view his poems in a particular tradition. This declaration of intent rejects certain themes, genres and styles associated with the earthly love of Venus and Cupid and embraces "les mortz" of a more elevated form of love. The apparent humility of these lines is typical of the love poetry of fin' amors as exemplified by the verse of the dolce stil novo. In addition it demonstrates the persona which Scève often assumes in Délie. The persona is a poetic device, a public face, but beneath this surface convention is the private poet positively asserting himself in the mastery of this difficult verse, a verse of inner conflict, ambiguity and intellectual complexity.

This initial lyric contains the phrase "si durs Epygrammes" which is an allusion to the poetic tradition we are examining, hermeticism. As Dorothy Coleman convincingly shows, durus is part of a literary tradition that takes us back to Augustan Rome.[10]

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[9] The Délie of Maurice Scève, ed. I.D. McFarlane (London: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 119. All references to Délie are from this edition.

[10] Maurice Scève Poet of Love: Tradition and Originality (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 45-51.

But while she traces the special connotations that durus had for Roman writers, she does not identify the term with a tradition of hermetic poetry. She finds three uses for durus: (1) a term of rhetoric; (2) a genre or style; (3) an attitude towards composition.

There is little doubt that Scève as a humanist is aware of the Roman literary tradition. Not only did he write a considerable amount of Latin verse, but he was associated with the Neo-Latin poets of the Lyon sodalitium. Thus it becomes clear that Scève, for all his affinities with Petrarchan writing, is not affiliating himself to it with this poetic declaration.

> And so by being dur Scève was deliberately turning away from the dolcezza of Petrarch and the petrarchists, and using the Roman term to mean the seriousness of the poet of high-style love. There is obviously a danger in this kind of writing and Scève realises that there will be mainte erreur in his poetry. Sometimes he will wrest words from a different language (in his case Italian or Latin) and will force them to carry specialised associations and meanings which can only be explained in terms of the dizain in question. It is in this dedication that he sets himself in the tradition which he had learnt, using Latin poetry as a model, in his early Neo-Latin poetry. His poetry will be hard and rough, not blurred or indefinite. It will not flow smoothly as Petrarch's does. Since "hard" and "rough" suggest the fabrication of a syntax that is highly-wrought and dense, Scève's poetry will perhaps strike the reader (Délie, in this

> case, for she is the person to whom the book is dedicated) as unpolished, but actually it is careful and difficult because his love and the problems he is going to treat are difficult.[11]

Scève's reference to the durus writing style recalls Quintilian's "aspera et dura," and of Dante's "aspr' e sottile." It is to this tradition of hermetic verse that the French poet subscribes. Here I disagree with I.D. McFarlane who, in his attempt to popularize Scève, maintains that "there is no question of his [Scève's] consciously following an aristocratic hermeticism such as was affected by some Neo-Latin poets of his age."[12]

Notwithstanding Parturier who tends to regard Délie as Scève's attempt to reproduce the Canzoniere in French, it is apparent that the Lyonnais poet is not blindly imitating the Petrarchan models. Scève is aware of the traditions he is using and combining, and he consciously modifies them to his own artistic purposes.

The first dizain of Délie contains an allusion to Petrarch's first sonnet in the Canzoniere, but is a distinct work in which Scève demonstrates aspects of his originality. A brief comparison of the French and Italian lyrics indicates Scève's use of, and departure from, the Petrarchan sensibility.

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[11] Coleman, p. 50.

[12] McFarlane edition, p. 1.

L'Oeil trop ardent en mes ieunes erreurs
Girouettoit, mal cault, a l'impourueue:
Voicy (ô paour d'agreables terreurs)
Mon Basilisque auec sa poingnant' veue
Perçant Corps, Coeur, & Raison despourueue,
Vint penetrer en l'Ame de mon Ame.
Grand fut le coup, qui sans tranchante lame
Fait, que viuant le Corps, l'Esprit desuie,
Piteuse hostie au conspect de toy, Dame,
Constituée Idole de ma vie.

While this lyric contains the conventional references to the giovenile errore, it is quite a contrast from Petrarch's sonnet.

Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono
di quei sospiri ond'io nudriva 'l core
in sul mio primo giovenile errore
quand'era in parte altr'uom da quel ch'i' sono,

del vario stile in ch'io piango et ragiono
fra le vane speranze e 'l van dolore,
ove sia chi per prova intenda amore,
spero trovar pietà, non che perdono.

Ma ben veggio or sí come al popol tutto
favola fui gran tempo, onde sovente
di me medesmo meco mi vergogno;

et del mio vaneggiar vergogna è 'l frutto,
e 'l pentersi, e 'l conoscer chiaramente
che quanto piace al mondo è breve sogno.[13]

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[13] Francesco Petrarca, Canzoniere, ed. G. Contini (Torino: Einaudi, 1968). All references to the Canzoniere are from this edition.

Dizain 1 contains some of the elements characteristic of Petrarchan writing, the lady's gaze, the basilisk, the wound, the antithesis of pleasure and pain, but recasts these abstract conventions by organizing them around the personal perspective of the poet. The first word in the lyric is "L'oeil" but it is the poet's eye rather than the lady's as is often the case. The "poingnant' veue" of the mistress is introduced in line four. There is an immediacy and a concreteness in Scève's dizain that is not present in Petrarch's sonnet. The French poet begins with the standard allusion to the giovenile errore but the Petrarchan expectations are destroyed by a number of changes. The Italian errore is singular and abstract. It has the sense given it in classical poetry, delusion and insanity as well as the Christian ethical connotation of moral error. The French is plural and concrete. These erreurs are part of a larger, more specific, more personal form of behaviour, the wanderings of youth and passing love affairs. This idea of instability is emphasized by the image of the roving eye and by the neologism, girouettoit. The passions of youth blow the lover about like the wind does the weathercock.

This complexity is demonstrated by the structure of the dizain which moves from a state of mobility to one of fixity. The wandering eye of line one is met by the piercing gaze of the lady's eye; the effects on the speaker are immediate and dramatic. Every

part of his being is affected. This is identified by Dorothy Coleman as the innamoramento, an instance of falling in love, highlighted in the poem by climactic action words: ardent, girouettoit, poingnant, perçant, and penetrer.[14] The focus is on the change of attitude in the poet brought about by the lady. From the action words in the first part, girouettoit and penetrer, the lyric moves to the stability of constitué in the final line. From this first dizain Scève establishes the permanent place of his mistress in his regard: hostie and idole.

Petrarch's initial sonnet, on the other hand, is not concerned with innamoramento. Rather than the immediacy of the emotion there is retrospective, self-examination and justification for falling in love. With the moral connotation of errore there is an element of guilt in the speaker as he describes his former self as "altr' uom da quel ch' i' sono," and his feeling as "mio vaneggiar vergogna." This self-consciousness and guilt along with the contemptus mundi is present in much of the Canzoniere in which feelings of love are often regarded as vane speranze. Instances of this hopelessness are sonnets CLXXIV, CXC, CCXII, and CCXLIV.

Petrarch's presence in Délie cannot be denied. As the allusions to the Canzoniere make clear Scève is well aware of Petrarch's pre-eminence in European poetry. The French poet

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[14] Coleman, pp. 24-25.

makes use of well known Petrarchan conventions to assert his own concepts and idioms. Doranne Fenoaltea puts forth the thesis that in Délie Scève is carrying on a dialogue with Petrarch's Canzoniere.[15] However, the manner in which Scève distinguishes himself from Petrarch, for example the conscious distortion of a Petrarchan topos, would suggest that the dialogue is in fact an argument. This significant condition of rivalry between the French and Italian poet makes Scève unpetrarchan. The referential element of allusion by contrast in Scève's verse is an instance of what Harold Bloom has identified as the anxiety of influence.[16]

The difference between Scève and Petrarch is manifest most clearly in their respective attitudes to style. Petrarch's sonnet is rhetorical demonstrating a delight in the use of literary devices for their own sake. Scève, on the other hand, employs the plain style, but it is simplex munditiis, plain and sophisticated. While the concentration of dizain 1 demands a direct form of expression it is at the same time allusive. The first word, "L'oeil," encapsulates the entire poem and introduces a major symbol in Délie. In dizain 129, as we shall see, the first three words, "Le iour passé," demonstrate a similar contradiction: deceptive simplicity and complex

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15 "Establishing Contrasts: An Aspect of Scève's Use of Petrarch's Poetry in Délie," Studi Francesi 19 (1975), 17-33.

16 The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry (New York: Oxford, 1973).

functions. In Scève's dizain every word and phrase is necessary to the force of the argument. Within such a close-knit structure the images revolve around the thought and argument. In effect they constitute a rhetoric of thought and argument as opposed to Petrarch's rhetoric of style that functions ut delectet.

In Petrarch's sonnet the structure is loose, the argument discursive. The first two lines could be omitted without hindering our understanding or weakening the poetic statement, which really begins with line three, "mio primo giovenile errore." The structure of the sonnet is based not on the demonstration of an argument but on a series of repetitions, alliterations and a parallel structure: "le vane speranze e 'l van dolore," "favola fui," and "me medesmo meco mi vergogno / et del mio vaneggiar vergogna. . . ." The emphasis here is on elaborate style.

The French poet's departure from Petrarchan conventions is unquestionably demonstrated in his dizain on jealousy, number 161. Here the baroque sensibility and the frank sensuality is reminiscent of John Donne's love poems. But unlike "The Extasie" or "The Flea" this dizain is a very compressed expression of strong emotion.

> Seul auec moy, elle auec sa partie:
> Moy en ma peine, elle en sa molle couche.
> Couuert d'ennuy ie me voultre en l'Ortie;
> Et elle nue entre ses bras se couche.

Hà (luy indigne) il la tient, il la touche:
Elle le souffre: &, comme moins robuste,
Viole amour par ce lyen iniuste,
Que droict humain, & non diuin, à faict.
O saincte loy a tous, fors a moy, iuste,
Tu me punys pour elle auoir meffaict.

The violence and frustration is clearly expressed by the realistic sensual detail, the vigourous language and the alliteration. The naked mistress in her husband's arms is a physical, sensual being that arouses a passionate jealousy in the poet. The shock of human experience and the concrete elements, ortie and molle couche, lead to a subtle argument in the lyric. The marriage of the mistress, "ce lyen iniuste," is violating the bond of love between them. Since "droict humain, & non diuin, à faict" the love relationship of the poet and Délie involves mutual obligations. The mistress' physical unfaithfulness to the lover is in a sense breaking the oath of true love.

This combination of intense emotion, jealousy and love, controlled by a complex argument on the "saincte loy" of love is a contortion of hermetic verse. The intellectual complexity here is inherent in the poem as the style reflects the tension and inner conflict of passion and reason. The use of more than twenty personal pronouns in this ten-line poem, along with the broken rhythm and staccato sentences would seem to suggest a loss of control on the part of the poet. Instead these function to demonstrate the power of jealous emotion. In the dura et aspera

style of this dizain Scève's struggle for mastery of the emotion, the moment and the poem indicate, if nothing else, that for this hermetic poet love is taken very seriously.

At the same time that we are considering Scève's individuality and his disparity from the Petrarchan tradition, we are uncovering the qualities which make him a hermetic poet. His is a verse of powerful emotion wrenched under intellectual expression and compressed into a terse ten-line lyric. This intellectual drive in Scève makes him move away from Petrarchan conventions. Petrarch is often clearly allegorical as in sonnet XXI, "Mille fiate, o dolce mia guerrera," canzoni XXVIII, "O aspectata in ciel beata et bella," and CCXXXVII, "Non à tanti animali il mar fra l'onde," whereas Scève is allusive. The Italian poet tends to be narrative as shown in canzoni XXIII, "Nel dolce tempo de la prima etade," L, "Ne la stagion che 'l ciel rapido inchina," and LIII, "Spirito gentil, che quelle membra reggi"; on the other hand the French poet is argumentative. With his dolcezza and facilità in writing about love Petrarch is lyrical, whereas Scève is serious and psychological.

Let us leave aside Scève's relationship to Petrarchism and consider him in his own right as a hermetic poet. Two of his most successful dizains, 129 and 367, are both on a similar theme, the separation of the lovers. Dizain 129 is a deceptively unobtrusive but difficult poem of considerable density.

Le iour passé de ta doulce presence
Fust vn serain en hyuer tenebreux,
Qui faict prouuer la nuict de ton absence
A l'oeil de l'ame estre vn temps plus vmbreux,
Que n'est au Corps ce mien viure encombreux,
Qui maintenant me fait de soy refus.
Car dès le poinct, que partie tu fus,
Comme [illegible] accroppy en son giste,
Ie tendz l'oreille, oyant vn bruyt confus,
Tout esperdu aux tenebres d'Egypte.

The starting-point of this dizain is the double antithesis: absence is to presence as darkness is to light. The condensed hermetic nature of the writing is evident in the first three words, "Le iour passé," which not only announce the theme of the poem, introduce the major metaphor but simultaneously bring forth a number of meanings: a specific day, a time past, the speaker's mental state, the daylight given by Délie's presence. In the first three lines the poet is saying that the memory of the day (and days) Délie was with him are like a moment of peace, light and warmth in the obscurity of winter. Her absence is as black as night. In the next three lines the antithesis is internalized, "l'oeil de l'ame" and "au corps." The darkness of his soul during his separation from Délie is worse than the physical suffering of living with her gone, since the body separated from the soul by absence is a living corpse.

There is a degree of ambiguity in Scève's process of internalizing the elements of the poem. In line 4 the inversion

of the infinitive clause is necessary for the rhyme, "vmbreux." But "l'oeil de l'ame" because of its position seems to refer not only to the spiritual state of the poet but to Délie herself and her role in the relationship. The lady as the source of light in the poet's life is, in a sense, the eye of his soul, a spiritual guide as Beatrice is to Dante. As we will see in the next chapter the preoccupation with visual topoi, emblems of light and the accompanying dizains constitute a leitmotiv in Délie.

The last three lines in this dizain employ two startling images which narrow and at the same time expand the metaphor of darkness and isolation. The physical and mental state of the speaker is transferred to that of the hare. The "lieure accroppy en son giste," captures in a visual manner the pose of bodily immobility, mental agitation and smallness before vast emptiness. The anxiety is one of a lost soul, "esperdu" and also an existential anguish before the "bruyt confus" of the world. The dramatic reference to Egypt enlarges the idea of desolation giving it religious connotations. Geographically Egypt is a far-off land, exotic, unknown; biblically it is the land of exile, darkness and plague (Exodus, X).

The striking images in these last three lines build up a series of associations which suggest the complexity of the poem. On the first level the hare conveys the solitariness of the poet after Délie has left him. The second level of associations

revolves around the sensation of hearing. From a crouching animal body, rigid, nervous and frightened by the slightest noise we visualize the state of the lover whose listening ability has become useless due to his great mental anxiety. The transference of the internal confusion to the perception of the external chaos is a profound insight on the part of the poet into the effects of mental conditions on the senses. The third association, then, is the physical and spiritual timidity and helplessness of the destitute lover. The phrase "oyant vn bruyt confus," has a triple function as it applies (1) to the fearful hare alert for noise and danger; (2) to the state of the lover; and (3) to the lost soul exiled in Egypt. Finally this process of internalizing and externalizing the absence of the lady is given religious and cosmic associations with the last line, "Tout esperdu aux tenebres d'Egypte." The obscurity, solitariness and plagues of Egypt are linked with the argument and imagery of the rest of the dizain: the darkness and cold of the first three lines, the state of body and soul of the next three and the "bruyt confus" of the penultimate line.

In this dizain the somewhat commonplace Renaissance antithesis of darkness and light is revitalized in a complex poetic expression. The intellectual vigour makes this more than just a lyric on lovers' separation, but a study of the psychology of love. The density and allusiveness is reminiscent of

Cavalcanti's "Perch' i' no spero di tornar giammai," rather than John Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning." The English metaphysical poet employs a more discursive style which often explains his metaphors and images. The simile of the twin compasses in "A Valediction" is extended over three stanzas leaving little doubt as to its meaning or function in the poem. This has the effect of limiting possible associations and eliminating ambiguity. The succinct verse of the stilnovisti and Scève requires the participation of the reader with all the difficulties in interpretation that this involves.

Ambiguity and hermetic complexity are evident in dizain 367 which begins with the absence of Délie but concentrates on the reunion of the two lovers.

> Asses plus long, qu'vn Siecle Platonique,
> Me fut le moys, que sans toy suis esté:
> Mais quand ton front ie reuy pacifique,
> Seiour treshault de toute honnesteté,
> Ou l'empire est du conseil arresté
> Mes songes lors ie creus estre deuins.
> Car en mon corps: mon Ame, tu reuins,
> Sentant ses mains, mains celestement blanches,
> Auec leurs bras mortellement diuins
> L'vn coronner mon col, l'aultre mes hanches.

The lovers meet after a month's separation. The suffering caused by the period of Délie's absence is captured in the first

two lines. The actual lapse of a month is expanded to an immeasurable length of time, "vn Siecle Platonique." The word platonique is ambiguous. In one sense it refers to the period put forth by the Pythagoreans and Plato as the span of time, 10,000 or 36,000 years, after which the heavenly bodies are to return to their original positions. This allusive phrase contains the optimistic suggestion that Délie too will return to her rightful place with the lover, no matter how long the absence. Platonique also connotes the notion of Platonic love, intimacy but physical separation. However, this is not the love with which the poem ends since the two lovers are left in an erotic embrace. Is the proper place for Délie in the poet's arms? The implications of this conflict are developed with considerable concentration in the rest of the poem.

In the subsequent lines the lady's moral qualities are praised. Her virtues are beyond the power of reason, "conseil arresté." But the presence of these abstractions becomes a reality only with the physical closeness of Délie. As in dizain 129, Scève is concerned with the analysis of an intensely personal experience in all its psychological dimensions. The struggle between the physical and the spiritual is suppressed but evident in the visual image on line 3, and the mental reactions indicated by lines 5 and 6. Physical vision of the actual has greater reliability than judgement or dreams in absence. The structure

and argument of the poem traces this conflict and leads to the powerful conclusion. From "Asses plus long" (l. 1) and "Mais" (l. 3) to the final statement, "Car en mon corps: mon Ame, tu reuins. . . ." Emotion is always under the control of art giving the poem a deceptive tranquility and reasonableness.

The last four lines deal with the ever-existing problems threatening love. With an intellectual density that fuses many of the themes in Délie: love, harmony, absence, life and death, the poet reaches a moment of extasy. But it is also a moment of tension between the physical and the spiritual elements of love. The ambiguity of lines 6 and 7

> Mes songes lors ie creus estre deuins.
> Car en mon corps: mon Ame, tu reuins,

is due to this precarious balance between flesh and spirit. Both in the poet's perception of Délie as a physical woman and as a divine presence there is conflict. It seems the speaker wishes to (1) perpetuate her spiritual perfection; (2) fulfil his physical desires and (3) at the same time deal with the perishable nature of man and human relationships.

Does the presence of Délie in fact reunite body and soul in the speaker? Within the context of the other dizains, 129 for example, the answer is yes since there is a schism of body and soul during the separation of the lovers. But in the dizain

itself the conflict between the desires of the body and the aspirations of the soul would seem to deny this harmonious reconciliation between the two. This inner tension is treated in an allusive manner in the final three lines. The speaker can feel the hands of Délie but the hands are heavenly and white. He can feel the arms; the flesh is "mortellement diuins." The lyric ends with the image of an erotic embrace, but the speaker observes of the lady's arm, "l'vn coronner mon col," which elevates the physical towards the spiritual level.

As the physical is given spiritual attributes, the resulting ambiguities reveal conflicts in the poet's mind. Has the will tipped the fragile balance in favour of bodily desire? The extatic union of the two lovers seems to give the flesh the spiritual qualities of the soul, "mains celestement blanches," and "bras mortellement diuins." At the same time the soul achieves a physical presence, "mon Ame . . . Sentant ses mains." However repetition of "mains" with the implied sensuality returns these hands to earth. The tension between "celestement" and "mortellement" remains unresolved. Physical love aspires to the divine but is in the end mortal.

The symmetry of the final lines reflects this movement between the body and the spirit. In addition to the paired oxymorons, "celestement blanches" and "mortellement diuins," the parallel structure of lines 7, 8, and 10 echo the conflict in

schematic fashion:

mon corps	:	mon ame
ses mains	:	mains celestes
mon col	:	mes hanches

As in stil novo verse the vigourous argumentative structure has a stark mathematical rigour. The visual pattern reminds us of Cavalcanti's "Donna me prega": a contradiction between simple style and complex meaning. De Mourgues writes about this dizain:

> So consummate is the balance and so intense the tension that the bold concrete picture of the two lovers' embrace which ends the dizain does not in the least point the way to further embraces, nor does it hang on to the poem like an additional grace. It possesses a marble-like quality, as if time had stopped and perfection were achieved in this self-sufficient and fully significant gesture.[17]

We shall conclude this chapter with an examination of dizain 195 and its comparison to Guinizelli's sonnet, "Lo vostro bel saluto e 'l gentil sguardo." Since dizain 195 is also accompanied by an emblem this discussion will lead us into the next chapter on the visual dimensions in Délie. A comparison of the Italian sonnet and the French dizain will show some of the affinities of style between the poets of the stil novo and Scève.

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17 Metaphysical, Baroque and Précieux Poetry, p. 22.

More significantly it will provide concrete instances of the tradition of hermetic poetry.

In his sonnet Guinizelli deals with a topos from Provençal and Italian poetry: the effects of the lady's greeting on the lover.

Lo vostro bel saluto e 'l gentil sguardo
che fate quando v'encontro, m'ancide;
Amor m'assale e già non ha reguardo
s'elli face peccato over merzede,

ché per mezzo lo cor me lanciò un dardo
ched oltre 'n parte lo taglia e divide;
parlar non posso, ché 'n pene io ardo,
sì come quelli che sua morte vede.

Per li occhi passa come fa lo trono,
che fer' per la finestra de la torre
e ciò che dentro trova spezza e fende:

remango como statua d'ottono
ove vita né spirto non ricorre,
se non che la figura d'omo rende.[18]

The conventional saluto is placed in a dramatic context of such violent emotion that it is startling. The complexity of this juxtaposition is increased by the fact that the "saluto" has

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[18] G. Contini, ed., Poeti del Duecento, vol. 2, p. 468.

meanings and associations far beyond this single poem.[19] The term saluto, like gentilezza (gentil sguardo), has an elaborate philosophical view of love behind it. This doctrinal and hermetic background is only implied by the rest of the poem. In the sonnet the "bel saluto" seems to be like a sacramental sign of love that is believed to have strange ambivalent powers: "s'elli face peccato, over merzede," to bestow harm or grace. The "bel saluto" has the attributes of a gift from heaven, "gia non ha reguardo," it is gratuitous in good or evil. The noble lady, then, seems to have supernatural powers as a love object of gentillezza and bellezza.[20]

This sonnet is made complex by the language, imagery, the speaker's point of view and his psychology. It is not at first clear that the terms in the first quatrain have special meanings beyond the literal expression of love. But it becomes more apparent that this quatrain shows not only the concentration of thought and erudite ideas but also related to this the difficulty of the verse, hermetic qualities that are characteristic of stil novo poetry.

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[19] In Dante's Vita Nuova III, 1-2 and XXVI Beatrice's "saluto" to him is a sign of the highest virtue and in the Paradiso XV, 34-36 he sees heaven in it.

[20] The complex notion of bellezza is explored by Edmondo Rho in "La Religione della Bellezza nel Dolce stil novo e la poesia di Guido Cavalcanti," in Primitivi e Romantici (Firenze: Sansoni, 1937), pp. 15-42.

The logical structure of Guinizelli's sonnet follows the meaning of the thought and course of the dramatic moment. This is a movement from external "saluto," "sguardo" to the internal "lo cor" and "spirto" which parallels the movement not only of the "dardo" and the "trono" but also reinforces that of the effect of love: outside and surface to inside and deep. This pattern seems to have a belief in a doctrine behind it. This concentration of language and intellectual structure are not characteristic of Petrarchan poetry.

To the stylistic complexity of Guinizelli's sonnet is added the difficulty of the implicit argument and love philosophy that lies behind it. This body of thought must remain unstated due to the limits of the sonnet, in one respect. But even in an explicitly didactic and argumentative poem of greater length such as Guinizelli's "Al cor gentil rempaira sempre amore" the obscurity remains.

Guinizelli's use of battle images, "m'ancide," "m'assale," and "lanciò un dardo," is a conventional device, later much used by the Petrarchans for trivial effects. Here though, its function is an essential one. The contrast between the delicacy of the first line and the second, indeed the contrast with the violent imagery of the rest of the poem is paradoxical. The "bel saluto" and "gentil sguardo" of the lady, though frail and harmless, are likened to a dart that enters the eye and pierces the heart of the

lover. The dart cuts the heart into parts. The concrete image of the dart slicing the heart uses the symbol of the physical heart splitting to communicate a metaphysical fission. The series of division words amplify this idea: "taglia e divide," "spezza e fende," and "vita ne spirto."

The paradox and the fusion of the abstract and the concrete in the imagery are not decorations but point to the reality that the poet is trying to convey: the dramatic tension within him between passion and reason. When the speaker says "parlar non posso, ché 'n pena io ardo" he further indicates the inner breakdown due to the effects of love. His speech, an intellectual faculty, is impaired by the "pena," the burning pain of his passions, a lower form of his consciousness. This internal disruption of the faculties is similar to that found in Scève's dizain 195 as we shall see.

The sestet contains the most innovative and startling imagery of the sonnet. The fusion of the concrete and the abstract again indicate the psychological split of the lover. The lady's "sguardo" enters the eyes with the swiftness and inescapable force of a lightning bolt entering a tower window. The bolt "spezza e fende," breaks and splits what it finds within as the lady's glance shears through the speaker's faculties: reason separated from passion, speech from feeling. The lightning bolt entering the tower window is an emblem that tries to capture visually and dramatically the mysterious effects of love on the lover's psyche.

The lover is burning in a state of pain like one who sees his death coming. This is the end of life and the death of extasy, both leading to new life, vita nuova, spiritual transformation. The disruptive extasy has left the lover not only a man divided within, "ove vita ne spirto non ricore," but also a hollow one, empty like a statue with only the shape of a man. The lover in extasy seems to be observing himself from outside, a man beside himself with love. The strength of the lover's emotion is unforgettably crystalized in the statue of brass, neither dead nor alive. This statue, like the boat of Scève's woodcut, is an emblem of the mysterious and inpenetrable nature of love and its strange effects on personality.[21]

From other stil novo poems we know that the effects of love are positive ones. They refine and civilize the heart that is potentially noble. Thus, although love seems to have a disruptive effect on the lover, the change is a spiritual one leading to honourable behaviour on all levels. It is the purgation anticipating the glorification.

Scève's dizain 195 deals with the lover's inner conflict between the parts of his being that draw him to his beloved and those that ward him away:

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[21] Paolo Possiedi, "Con quella spada ond' ella ancise Dido," MLN, 89, No. 1 (1974), 13-17 discusses the images of the lady and lover as statues in Dante and the stilnovisti.

195

Desir, souhaict, esperance, & plaisir
De tous costez ma franchise agasserent
Si viuement, que sans auoir loysir
De se deffendre, hors de moy la chasserent:
Deslors plus l'arbitre ilz pourchasserent,
Qui de despit, & d'ire tout flambant
Combat encor, ores droit, or tumbant
Selon qu'en paix, ou estour ilz le laissent.
Mais du pouoir soubz tel faix succumbant
Les forces, las, de iour en iour s'abaissent.

If we read this poem as an example of Petrarchan poetry it appears straightforward, on the surface. But a closer scrutiny shows that it is a complex piece of verse due to several elements: the language of the speaker, his point of view, his psychology and the emblem. These aspects and the meaning of the poem can only partially be explained by the Petrarchan tradition. Unlike Guinizelli, Scève does not need to address the lady in the poem or even to refer to her directly. Because of Petrarchan poetry we know, even without reference to the rest of Délie, that he is implicitly speaking about his love for a lady. But the poem goes beyond these Petrarchan models.

In Guinizelli's sonnet the use of battle vocabulary occupies only the first few lines. Scève makes combat the central metaphor of his poem. Where a Petrarchan poem would use battle

images as a simple rhetorical device Scève employs them in a complex extended metaphor which renders an understanding of the poem difficult.

The vocabulary of battle while making the struggle more vivid also gives the speaker a strange air of detachment. The lover refers to "ma franchise" and "hors de moy" which suggest that he is speaking about himself but he also refers to "[ils] agasserent," "ilz pourchasserent" and "ilz le laissent," which implies that these forces are not part of him but external to his being. Line two suggests that the attack is "de tous costez." This and the martial diction create a kind of seige by "Desir, souhaict, esperance, & plaisir" on "franchise" and "arbitre." The speaker seems to visualize two opposing forces meeting in a state of seige. This vantage point of an observer, reminiscent of Guinizelli, gives him a kind of detachment. His position also seems to be one of powerlessness to effect these forces or the outcome of the combat. But the detachment is paradoxical since the speaker is not removed from the conflict but personally and intimately involved in it. As in Guinizelli we have the added paradox of the lover using violent terms to explain the subtle and intimate movements of love within himself; a hermetic contortion.

In Scève's <u>dizain</u> the speaker seems not only confused about which side of the struggle he is supposed to support but also passive and powerless. Is it possible that this is due to the

fact that he has lost his freedom, franchise, and that his judgement, arbitre, is slowly losing, "de jour en jour"? The structure of the argument follows the pattern of a losing battle; "chasserent" to "s'abaissent." Is it the defeat anticipating the victory of love?

The psychology of the speaker and the manner in which he views his dilemma is more complex than it first appears. It is not merely the Petrarchan commonplace of reason versus passion. In Scévien terms the lover's being is composed of three parts: body, heart and soul.[22] By oversimplifying it, we could explain his psychology in the following manner. The heart is the seat of emotion and instinct and does not have power to govern itself. The spontaneity of the heart has two aspects: the passive affection and the active désir. The heart also contains the inferior forms of consciousness: sentiment and passion. The soul, the anima of the body, is the seat of virtue and has the superior powers of intellect, judgement or arbitre, and free will, franchise. This view of human psychology is more complex than Petrarchan dichotomies and is closer to the view of the stilnovisti—Dante's Vita Nuova for example.

On the surface the speaker's conflict is between "Desir, souhaict, esperance, & plaisir" on one side and "franchise" and

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22 V.-L. Saulnier, "Anatomie psychologique," in Maurice Scève (Paris: Klinksieck, 1948), I, pp. 236-40.

"arbitre" on the other. But while "desir" and "plaisir" are associated with passion and all belong to the heart, "souhaict" and "esperance" connote intellectual elements that point the way to the soul. Thus the struggle is not between rational and irrational forces only, since "souhaict" and "esperance" can be associated with the superior powers of the soul. Rather it is the lover's soul that is in conflict with itself. Thus the paradox of the lover passively observing a siege is all the more acute since it indicates the degree of his inner conflict and the power of love to reach the roots of his being. He is so overturned with love that he is outside himself. As in Guinizelli the lover can observe himself succumbing from day to day. In a sense the lover has already been mastered by love.

The emblem that precedes this dizain seems to have some significance to the poem, though this too is not readily apparent. The picture represents a rowboat offshore, without passengers and with broken oars. Could this empty hull of a boat symbolize the empty body of the lover, without arbitre as his captain to guide him and without franchise the will to propel him, in a word, listless? This emblem in both function and meaning then, reminds us of Guinizelli's statue, hollow, powerless. The motto of the emblem "Mes forces de jour en jour s'abaissent" is used in the final line of the dizain.[23]

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[23] See Appendix E for reproductions of some of the emblems discussed in this and the next chapter.

The persona that Scève adopts in Délie is similar to that of Guinizelli and Cavalcanti but different from Petrarch. The detachment, the objective point of view, are characteristic of the anonymous persona often found in hermetic verse. This impersonal speaker may at times have an almost prophetic quality, and speak with apparent assurance and knowledge about the nature of love and human behaviour. Although we may suspect some "doctrine" in the background the foreground is at once direct and allusive.[24]

In the Canzoniere, on the other hand, Petrarch's persona anticipates the birth of the modern soul, a modern lyrical "I." It has been called "autoreflexive and self-contained," and "a thoroughly autonomous portrait of the poet. . . ."[25] Unlike Scève Petrarch is self-enclosed in his attempt to exclude referentiality from his text as much as possible. The hermetic poet, as Pound suggests, is eclectic, he is enclosed in a larger context of literary allusion, doctrine and philosophy.[26]

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[24] While the members of the dolce stil novo, Guinizelli, Cavalcanti, Dante, Cino, Lapo Gianni, Dino Frescobaldi and Gianni Alfani may be said to share a philosophy of love and similar views on the style of love poetry, the same cannot be said about Scève and the other members of l'école lyonnaise, Louise Labé, Pernette du Guillet, Pontus de Tyard and Georgette de Montenay.

[25] John Freccero, "The Fig Tree and the Laurel: Petrarch's Poetics," Diacritics 5 (1975), 34-40.

[26] "Cavalcanti: Medievalism," p. 159.

The paradoxes of the *dizains* are the result of the philosophical view of love that lie behind Scève's verse. The poet is dealing with a problem that is due to the essential contradictions of the nature of love: love is in the lover by the natural disposition of his heart but it seems to be acting on him from outside and in a sense, it is. The complexities of this and other subtleties are treated by Cavalcanti in his doctrinal poem, "Donna me prega." Maurice Scève in *Délie*, and the *stilnovisti* poets seem to be constantly occupied with the philosophical questions of love: the presence and absence of lovers, the refining qualities of love, the possibility of union and individuality in love, the nature of love. These poets are dealing with questions that are called metaphysical. In many poems, however, these questions can only be assumed to lie behind the recondite terms and succinct verses. This hiatus in understanding that requires the reader's faith and cooperation is characteristic of hermetic verse in general and the verse of the *stilnovisti* and Scève in particular.

CHAPTER VIII

SCEVE: VISUAL HERMETIC

One of the paradoxes of hermetic poetry is that the author is so concerned with the language of the literary work that his preoccupation takes the verse beyond the basic verbal level. Guido Guinizelli's love poetry explores philosophical ideas and human psychology from a religious-mystical perspective. The rational inclinations of Cavalcanti lead him to the critical study of philosophical questions about the nature of love and human potential. In the light of Cavalcanti's cold reason it is a particular contradiction that "Donna me prega" demonstrates a treatment of language that is ineffable. Less mysterious but equally obscure, Dante employs allegory and literary criticism

ostensibly to expand upon the didactic function of his verse. With all three, poetry is never just poetry; it is intellectual, philosophical, scientific or mystical. In this tradition Scève likewise does not commit the 449 dizains in Délie solely to the verbal dimensions of the Renaissance lyric. The fifty woodcuts carefully employed as emblems in the lyric sequence move Délie into the realm of the visual arts. The role of the emblems in Scève's work is a contentious issue as we will see.

In this chapter we will consider three topics. First, we will summarize the controversy surrounding Scève's emblems. Second, the visual inclinations of the lyrics themselves will be examined. Third, we will attempt to show the function of the emblems within the movement of the lyric sequence. Our ultimate aim is to show that Scève has produced an integrated work. While the 449 dizains in Délie are not all of the quality of those analysed in chapter VII, the lyrics and the emblems are intended by Scève to produce a unified effect. Not only is Scève a serious artist writing complex intellectual verse but one experimenting with the then new development of the emblem and print.

In his two volume work devoted to emblem books Mario Praz observes the neglect that the Délie of Maurice Scève has suffered:

> Although the devices in Délie have a great importance in the development of the genre, as we have tried to show . . . very few catalogues of emblems--usually so

> ready to welcome any book on the slightest pretence--record this work, which is one of the few emblem-books that have any real literary value.[1]

Nevertheless Praz spends only about three pages on Scève as does R.J. Clements in a more recent book on Renaissance emblems.[2] While on the one hand studies of the relation between les belles-lettres and les beaux arts usually do not consider emblem books such as Délie, on the other hand, editors of French Renaissance poetry have diminished the importance of the woodcut engravings by omitting them from editions. This is especially true of Scève's Délie where, it seems, it has become acceptable to avoid using the fifty emblems even in editions that are termed complete.[3] This practice is supported by Donald Stone Jr. who maintains that the relation between the poems and the pictures in Délie is so oblique that it is non-existent. Scève, Stone argues, was only interested

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[1] Studies in Seventeenth Century Imagery (London: Warburg Institute, 1939), vol. II, p. 150.

[2] Picta Poesis: Literary and Humanistic Theory in Renaissance Emblem Books (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1960).

[3] See Bertrand Guégan, ed. Oeuvres poétique complètes de M. Scève (Paris, 1927), Jean Porcher, ed. Délie (Paris, 1943), Hans Staub, ed. Oeuvres complètes de Maurice Scève (Paris, 1970), Pascal Quignard, ed. Maurice Scève: Oeuvres complètes (Paris, 1974) as well as the anthologies edited by J. Aynard (1924), Albert Béguin (1947), A.M. Schmidt (1953) and A. Roubichou-Stretz (1973).

in the mottoes and not in the woodcuts.[4]

While the engravings in some miscellanies can be regarded as little more than quaint examples of the Renaissance craze for emblem books, this is not the case with Scève's Délie, as we shall see. In 1948, V.-L. Saulnier gave some consideration to the problem of Scève's emblems,[5] but more recently Dorothy Coleman has emphasized the importance of the engravings for a fuller understanding of the dizains.[6] While this last view is supported by Ruth Mulhauser[7] and Charlotte Melançon,[8] it is questioned not only by Stone but also by Enzio Giudici who has reservations about the process of association between emblem and accompanying dizain.[9]

In Maurice Scève Poet of Love: Tradition and Originality (1975) Dorothy Coleman vindicates herself and Scève's reputation as a humanist by placing the woodcuts in Délie within a broad cultural context of Italian imprese amorose, emblems, symbols, blasons, and strambotti. One of the major contributions that

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[4] "Scève's Emblems," Romanic Review, v. 60, no. 2 (1969), 101.

[5] Maurice Scève, v. I, pp. 210-13.

[6] "Les Emblèmes dans la Délie de Maurice Scève," Studi Francesi 22, no. 1 (1964), 1-15.

[7] "The Poetic Function of the Emblems in Délie," L'Esprit Créateur, v. 5, No. 2 (1965), 80-89.

[8] "Les Décimales de 'Délie,'" Etudes Françaises, v. 2, No. 1 (1975), 33-53.

[9] Maurice Scève, poeta della Délie (Rome: Dell' Ateno, 1965).

Coleman makes to the debate is to clarify the confusion over the emblem tradition. She distinguishes between emblems and *imprese*.

> A great difference between emblems and *imprese*, commented upon by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theorists, is the "open," easily understandable or easily explicable nature of the emblem (as befits a genre whose main function is to instruct its readers) and the "closed," subtle, half-hermetic quality of the *impresa* which aims to express a personal thought or intention.[10]

Because of the personal manner in which Scève employs the emblems in *Délie*, Coleman would prefer to call them *imprese*.

Study and discussion of the woodcuts in Délie can only progress with the aid of truly complete editions of the lyric sequence. Whether we call them emblems or *imprese*, it is only with access to the woodcuts as they were arranged in the original printings that we can begin to understand what Scève achieves in *Délie*.[11]

The first European emblem book was produced by Andrea Alciati in 1531, printed in Augsburg at the Heinrich Steyner press.[12] In

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[10] Coleman, p. 96.

[11] I.D. McFarlane's is one of the three modern editions that reproduce all 50 emblems as they were arranged among the 449 *dizains*. The others are edited by E. Parturier (Paris, 1916) and J. Horden (Menston, U.K.: The Scolar Press, 1972).

[12] This is the first proven edition, though some authors say that Alciati's *Emblematum* first appeared in 1522 or 1524. There are Paris editions for 1534, 1535, 1536, and 1542.

his study of emblem books Praz shows how Alciati's Emblematum Liber was influenced by translations of Greek manuscripts on hieroglyphics.[13] In the 1551 edition of the Emblematum Alciati speaks of the practical and decorative uses of the emblem, echoing the words of Filippo Fasanini on the uses of hieroglyph.

Just as the illuminated manuscript is the product of the mediaeval scriptorium, so the emblem book is a phenomenon of the Renaissance invention, the printing press. The woodcut emblems use the same principle as printing. It seems natural that the two, engraving and printing, should come together in book form. With Gutenberg's development, emblem after emblem could be reproduced on the written page in every minute detail just as the printed word was. Quantities of books could be printed and reprinted and circulated to meet a growing demand. Emblem books became popular text books for learning to read and for the Church to use in religious and moral instruction.

Printing in the Renaissance was looked upon as an art too:

> L'organisation de l'imprimerie au seizième siècle est très différente de celle de nos jours. A l'époque

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[13] Praz, vol. I, pp. 19-21, shows that Alciati came in contact with Filippo Fasanini who in 1517 had translated Horapollo's Hieroglyphica and with Konrad Peutinger who owned a Greek manuscript of the Hieroglyphica and a 1515 translation of it by B. Trebatius.

> de la Renaissance, la typographie est plutôt un art qu'un métier, et les imprimeurs sont plutôt des érudits et des artistes que des industriels.[14]

Thus the joint use of woodcuts with print was not simply a commercial innovation in the book business but a union of two artistic forms. With the emblem book the printer was trying to create an artifact which was not only attractive but a mixed sensory experience like an illuminated manuscript. The emblem book was interesting to read, pleasing to look at, and an intellectual stimulus. As an artifact, the emblem book with its mottoes, epigrams and commentaries would be an object of contemplation. The irony is that the modern invention of printing with moveable type was instrumental in resurrecting the ancient art of hieroglyphics. Renaissance authors and artists were fascinated with hieroglyphs because they thought that these images were an ideographical form of writing with which Egyptian priests foreshadowed divine ideas, and from which Greek philosophers had derived ancient wisdom. These humanists felt that emblems were a modern equivalent of hieroglyphics and that the occult element in these symbolic representations was still present.[15]

Alciati's book of emblems, which went through many editions and translations, became very popular and influential in the

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[14] A. Baur, Maurice Scève et la Renaissance lyonnaise (Paris: Champion, 1906).

[15] L. Dieckmann, Hieroglyphics, The History of a Literary Symbol, pp. 1-47.

production of other emblem books. The Paris edition of 1534 was in the original Latin, while that of 1536 was the first French translation. The first Italian translation was produced in Lyon in 1549. Thus Alciati's Emblematum first conceived in Milan returned to Italy via Lyon. Two popular imitations of Alciati's book were Guillaume de la Perrière's Le Théâtre des bons engins (Paris, 1539), the first French emblem book, followed by Gilles Corrozet's Hécatomgraphie (Paris, 1540).

The next significant emblem book was Maurice Scève's Délie, printed in Lyon in 1544. Since Délie appeared only about thirteen years after the advent of Alciati's book and followed a similar formula for its emblems, there is little doubt that it was a product of the Milanese lawyer's example. In addition to this, some of Scève's woodcuts seem to have their antecedents in Alciati's pictures. Whether Scève consciously shares the Renaissance preoccupation with cabbalistic elements found in some emblem books is not clear and has been the object of some speculation.[16]

Lyon at this time was a centre of Renaissance publishing:

> On sait que Lyon était déjà dans le dernier quart du quinzième siècle une des places les plus importantes de la librairie en Europe, et cette importance alla grandissant jusqu'aux guerres religieuses. Vers le milieu du seizième siècle, Lyon n'est surpassé que par

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[16] Saulnier, vol. I, pp. 133 ff.

> Venise pour le nombre, les qualités artistiques et la correction de ses éditions et pour la variété des matières traitées.[17]

It is understandable that the emblem book, the latest development in the Renaissance printing art, should be produced at Lyon.[18] As well as being active in cultural exchange with the Italian centres of printing Lyon was in competition with them, especially the Aldine press in Venice. Thus although this Venetian press printed a Latin edition of Alciati's book in 1546 it was the Lyonnais edition of 1549, in Italian, that became widely current in Italy.

That Scève is part of the development of emblem literature at Lyon is indicated not only by Délie but also by his use of woodcut illustrations in his Saulsaye, Eglogue de la vie solitaire (Lyon, 1547), and in La Magnificence . . . Entrée . . . faite . . . de Henry deuxième . . . (Lyon, 1549). Thus the French poet's emblem mentality and use of pictorial material in his writing makes him a good representative of those Renaissance authors and humanists who liked to look at the arts as inter-related activities.

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[17] Baur, p. 7.

[18] Several imitations of Alciati's book were printed at Lyon: G. de la Perrière's Les Cent Considérations d'amour (1543) and La Morosophie (1553), Claude Paradin's Devises Heroiques (1551), Barthelemy Aneau's Picta Poesis (1552), and Pierre Cousteau's Pegma (1555).

The visual preoccupation of the Lyonnais poet is demonstrated in the lyrics themselves. The first dizain in Délie introduces the optical motif which permeates the entire sequence of dizains and imprese.

> L'Oeil trop ardent en mes ieunes erreurs
> Girouettoit, mal cault, a l'impourueue:
> Voicy (ô paour d'agreables terreurs)
> Mon Basilisque auec sa poingnant' veue
> Perçand Corps, Coeur, & Raison despourueue,
> Vint penetrer en l'Ame de mon Ame.
> Grand fut le coup, qui sans tranchante lame
> Fait, que viuant le Corps, l'Esprit desuie,
> Piteuse hostie au conspect de toy, Dame,
> Constituée Idole de ma vie.

This initial reference to "l'oeil" is echoed in dizain 2, "Qu'au premier oeil mon ame l'adora," dizain 3 "Dont l'oeil credule ignoramment meffit," dizain 5 "Mais l'oeil, qui feit a mon coeur si grand' playe." These allusions continue in dizains 6, 12, 13, 15, 16, 24, 26, and in subsequent dizains, among them: 60, 82, 186, 231, 297, and 443.

The basilisk in dizain 1 not only recurs in later lyrics and emblems but is a type of the many figures who gaze outward or look inward at their own reflections. The opening dizain then, introduces the patterns and sets the stage for the dramas which occur in the rest of Délie.

In considering the visual orientation of Délie, two ideas should be borne in mind. In understanding Renaissance poetics an important concept is that a picture can present the intelligible by means of the visible, by using the particular to point to the universal. This applies to the concreteness of some Renaissance imagery as well as to emblem literature. Secondly, the Neo-Platonic notion that the eye is the highest and noblest of sense organs in man, to some extent, explains the obsession that poets demonstrate with eyes in their verse. Both these related systems of thought are given stimulus by the Petrarchan tradition with its easily definable visual motifs, the physical attributes of the lady and allegorical figures.

With regard to the lyrics, and not the woodcuts, Hans Staub has observed that "Scève est d'abord poète du regard; il le sera d'un bout à l'autre de ce recueil qui commence par le mot 'Oeil.'"[19] The visual topoi of the lyrics are extended by the pictorial elements of the imprese which push the literary work into the domain of the graphic arts.

The emblem formula as devised by Alciati consists of a symbolic picture, a motto, followed by a verse developing the meaning or explaining the moral of the emblem. This mixed genre,

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19 Le Curieux désir: Scève et Peletier du Mans poètes de la connaissance (Genève: Droz, 1967), p. 37.

by drawing on various sources, on the one hand ancient visual symbolism, hieroglyphics, mediaeval allegory, bestiaries, the visual arts, and on the other hand, classical wisdom, the Bible, maxims, fables, and belles-lettres, is able to bridge, to some extent, the visual and the literary media.

We should keep in mind that these woodcuts are by nature part of a visual tradition that extends back to hieroglyphics. Thus we can see that questions as to whether Scève found his emblems ready-made or had them engraved for his poems are not vital to a discussion of the relation between woodcut and poem. Since in one way or another the emblems would have been derivative; what is important is how Scève employed them in his total work.

Alciati and his immediate imitators used the emblem picture and motto as a point of departure for a didactic commentary usually drawing some universal adage. This was the case with Claude Paradin's Devises Heroiques (Lyon, 1557), a most popular collection of emblems from diverse sources, religious and classical, with prose commentaries. Several years later Georgette de Montenay used wood engravings to propagate her Calvinist religious views in Emblemes ou Devises Chrestiennes (Lyon, 1571). Here Biblical and allegorical figures were followed by moralizing octaves.[20] The verses or prose commentaries, then, were ekphrastic.

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[20] See Jindrich Zezula and R.J. Clements, "La Troisième Lyonnaise: Georgette de Montenay," L'Esprit Créateur, 5, 2 (1965), 90-101.

They did speak for, and explain, the emblem. The woodcut, motto and epigram or commentary were interdependent, if not inseparable, in their obvious instructional function.

This is not the case with Scève's Délie. With the exception of woodcut 50 and dizain 447, the pictures and mottoes are not the starting point of the verses. In the majority of cases the dizain stands as an independent poem which refers back to the motto of the emblem in its last verse or verses. In some cases there seems to be no connection between dizain and woodcut. An example of this obscurity is the first emblem. This engraving represents a wounded unicorn with its head on the lap of a woman, a virgin.[21] The motto reads, "Pour te voir ie pers la vie." Dizain 6 which follows the impresa alludes to the situation it depicts in an indirect fashion. The words "libre," "surpris," and "m'estonna" could refer to the unicorn and the states of mind and body which he represents. However there is no clear relationship between the impresa and dizain 6:

> Libre viuois en l'Auril de mon aage,
> De cure exempt soubz celle adolescence,
> Ou l'oeil, encor non expert de dommage,
> Se veit surpris de la doulce presence,
> Qui par sa haulte, & diuine excellence

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[21] See Appendix E for reproductions of this and some of the other emblems discussed here.

M'estonna l'Ame, & le sens tellement,
Que de ses yeulx l'archier tout bellement
Ma liberté luy à toute asseruie:
Et des ce iour continuellement
En sa beaulté gist ma mort, & ma vie.

Scève here does not embody the motto in the last line of the dizain as is often the case. Nevertheless, the last line by alluding to life and death does take us back to the woodcut and the motto which we looked at before reading the poem. By making the reader circle back to the impresa Scève has him re-examine it in the light of the poem. Since the reader absorbed the engraving first and then read the poem he did so with certain expectations. The unicorn had multiple associations for a reader in the Renaissance: purification, chastity, Christ's incarnation, and marriage.[22] But the verses do not give an obvious explanation to the picture. The reader has to make the association himself between the loosely connected picture and verse. Scève's recondite and concise verses do not lead the reader to any facile moral from the impresa. This complex association between engraving and verse modifies the reader's perception of both since he must re-examine each in the light of the other.

In this impresa the antithesis between life and death is symbolized by the wounded unicorn. But the connection between

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[22] G. de Tervarent, Attributs et symboles dans l'art profane (1450-1600)(Genève: Droz, 1958), cols. 235-40,"Licorne."

the last line and the motto indicates a personal identification between the poet and the unicorn and Délie and the virgin. The mediaeval legend of the unicorn is thus invoked to dramatize, visually, the love situation of the speaker.

This symbolic relation between visual and literal levels is more easily shown in the Délie than in other art and literature parallels because in this series of woodcuts the picture and verse are intentionally juxtaposed as two separate entities joined by a peculiar element, the constantly modified perceptions of the reader.

Another example of this process of re-examination is emblem 9 which depicts a shield pierced by an arrow. The motto: "Ma fermeté me nuit" suggests that the lover finds himself injured because of his constancy. But dizain 78 makes the meaning ambiguous. The significance of the emblem could also be the paradox that those who are the most firm in resisting love--the shield represents self-defence--nevertheless, once they fall in love, are the most faithful lovers, since love conquers them.

The antecedent of this emblem seems to be one by Alciati which has a swan insignia on the shield. Alciati's swan is identified with the figure of the poet but not Alciati personally. As the Latin verse indicates, the swan breathes its last breath in beautiful song. By using a shield to allude to Alciati's famous insignia poetarum, Scève may be suggesting that he, the

poet as lover, is the most sensitive and constant of lovers. The faithfulness of swans is indicated by their mating for life. In Coleman's terms, Scève has transformed Alciati's emblem into his own impresa. When reading dizain 78 the reader must now consider it in terms of the complexities that Scève has brought to the once impersonal shield and epigrammatic motto.[23]

In his Laocoön Lessing tells us that the verbal art functions in time while the visual one functions in space.[24] The effect of a picture is total and simultaneous while a poem unravels gradually as we read. The Emblematum of Alciati seems to conform to Lessing's distinctions. Jean Hagstrum's notion of stasis is achieved since the verses are an explanation of the figures that pose in the woodcut.[25] Alciati's verses are pictorial in their dependence on the emblems. But since in Scève's imprese the temporal relation is a more complex one, stasis is a more difficult thing to determine. We could argue that, aside from the figures in the emblems themselves, there is no stasis in the dynamics of

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[23] The shield emblem is returned to the impersonal realm of universal aphorism by Paradin (1557) and religious maxim by Montenay (1571) who use it in their emblem books.

[24] Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry, trans. E.A. McCormick (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962), chapters 15, 16, 17.

[25] "The Sister Arts: From Neoclassic to Romantic," in Comparatists at Work: Studies in Comparative Literature, edd. S.G. Nichols and R.B. Vowles (Toronto: Blaisdell, 1968), pp. 172-73.

Scève's series of poems. In one sense Scève has retained Lessing's separation between the graphic figures in space and the verbal movement in time. The *dizains* are independent of the emblem pictures. But by directing the movements of the reader, Scève has brought the spatial picture into the temporal dimension of the poem. Scève's peculiar kind of juxtaposition of the *impresa* with the lyric has tended to bring out the emblem's verbal qualities by making it function in the drama of the poem. The relationship is not one of dependence but of association.

In this way Scève's *imprese* function in a different manner from the emblems of his contemporaries. Since the *dizains* employ the recurrent motifs of eyes, sight, reflection and introspection, they too possess a visual orientation which affiliates them to the *imprese*. The connection between the *dizains* and the *imprese* is a pictorial one, not merely a literary one. The literary connection of other emblem books is restricted to the verbal repetition of the mottoes and the verse or prose commentaries.

In the emblems of Alciati and his imitators the moralizing intention of the author excludes any personal element in the verses. Since the role of the author is to collect and to pass on ancient wisdom for the universal edification of the reader, he is not to express personal sentiments. There is no identification of the author with any of the figures in the woodcut. With Alciati, then, the emblem and epigram remain public forms of art, essentially pictorial.

But Scève seems to be aware that printing has created a potentially private form of art in the book. The Lyonnais poet therefore has taken the public and open form of expression, the picture, and combined it with the private and closed form, the personal lyric. The most significant element of style in the dizains is their personal character. Since the speaker in the dizains that accompany the impreses repeatedly implies an identification with the symbolism of the woodcuts, the impreses take on this personal characteristic. By making his emblem book, Délie, an attractive artifact of contemplation, Scève has made the pictorial private. Why, after expressing himself in painting, sculpture and architecture, did Michelangelo find it necessary to write poems? Because they were a personal form of expression; the other arts were public.[26] It is due to Scève's perspicacity that he was able to combine the two forms in his Délie.

The effects of printing on the literature of the Renaissance are emphasized by Elizabeth Eisenstein in her study of the problem:

> Printing forged new links between beaux arts and belles lettres. It initiated an unprecedented interchange between book-reading painters and image-viewing literati that is still going on today. . . . When hand-illuminated books became outmoded, for example, images were released from the margins of texts. Pictorial motifs, formerly linked to particular passages, were freed to be combined

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[26] Michelangelo Buonarroti, Rime, ed. Ettore Barelli (Milano: Rizzoli, 1975).

> in new ways and treated as elements in larger scale compositions. These compositions reflect the new book-reading habits of artists and the enrichment of existing literary diets. Themes drawn from different books were fused together with other disparate ingredients into grand designs. Multiple levels of meaning were conveyed in visually unified schemes. Once book format and scribal convention ceased to determine choice of subject and treatment, the artist's own ideas come to the fore. Personal taste . . . began to leave a more prominent mark and, by means of self-portraits, the artist began to advertise himself.[27]

Though Eisenstein does not mention emblem books as such in her essay, these words can be applied not only to printing in Renaissance Lyon but to Scève's Délie. The composition of Scève's printed text seems to follow the process outlined by Eisenstein, even to the extent that Scève's portrait in a woodcut illustration is placed facing the first three dizains in both the 1544 and 1564 editions of Délie. This work of the Lyonnais poet is eclectic in the sources of its materials which are arranged in new combinations. The composition of poems and pictures does reflect not only the personal taste of Scève but the personal drama that he has captured on several levels: literal, symbolic, visual and psychological.

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[27] "The Advent of Printing and the Problem of the Renaissance," Past and Present, No. 45 (1969), 64-65.

However the grand design of Scève's emblems and poems has been questioned. Ruth Mulhauser cautiously ends her study with the observation:

> It would be premature, however, to conclude on the basis of our study . . . that aesthetic structure of the total work derives from the subtle interplay between visual and poetic symbol.[28]

In his introductory note to Scève's Délie Dudley Wilson warns that:

> Although it is possible to establish some connection between most of the emblems and the dizain immediately following them, it must also be clear that this does not involve a connection between the emblems as a series and the 449 dizains as a collection of poems celebrating a love affair.[29]

This point of view is understandable since the unity of Scève's emblems is not readily apparent. In most emblem books each engraving, motto and proverbial verse form a self-contained unit. The relation of one unit to another is often non-existent. Thus emblem books are by nature miscellanies often with no coherent plan and little homogeneity. Georgette de Montenay's Emblems ou Devises Chrestiennes (1571) tries to achieve some unity by concentrating on a single religious theme. The Dutch emblematist,

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[28] Mulhauser, p. 89.

[29] Ed. J. Horden, p. viii.

Daniel Heinsius, attempted to give harmony to his Emblemata amatoria (ca. 1607) by concentrating on the portrayal of Cupid and his effects in human affairs. This Dutch emblem book is a good example of the derivative nature of these texts and their mixed ancestry. In addition to the Dutch verses the mottoes are in Latin, Italian and French and the visual material comes from the texts of Alciati, Paradin, Scève, Montenay and others.[30]

One of the differences that we notice when we compare Délie to other emblem books is that Scève seems to have consciously avoided the appearance of a miscellany. For example we are struck by the conspicuous absence of Cupid figures in the 50 woodcuts. Cupid had become a very common image in emblems since the advent of Alciati's book. Even in religious emblems he is popular and seems at times to merge with the Christ Child—a confusion reflected by the puttos in baroque frescoes. Nevertheless, though Délie is a series of love poems in the Petrarchan tradition, there is no Cupid in the woodcuts. By consciously breaking from this visual cliché in emblems, Scève asserts his individual taste and also continues to maintain the necessary separation between emblems and love poems. It is interesting to note that Heinsius introduced Cupid into many of the emblems which he borrowed from Scève's Délie.

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[30] Texts for the works of Paradin, Montenay and Heinsius are from the series of reproductions of continental emblem books edited by J. Horden (Menston, U.K.: The Scolar Press).

Thus Délie is very different from other emblem books. It is a series of love poems that illustrate not only the progress of the poet's love relationship but primarily the personal development of the lover himself. The various dizains capture the speaker's hopes, anxieties, pains and joys in his love for Délie. Just as the dizains are unified by this all-pervasive personal dimension of the poet's love, so also by extension are the woodcuts. They reflect in visual and symbolic forms the various sentiments of the poet: hope, despair, life, death and introspection.

In addition to this indirect unifying element the 50 engravings have an integrity that is due to their own visual qualities. The recurrent use of 16 types of decorative frameworks along with six different geometrical shapes forming a pattern throughout the poem suggests that the emblems are more homogeneous than we may at first note.[31] But more significantly the re-appearance throughout the emblems of certain figures, objects and visual motifs gives them the qualities of an integrated work of art with complex and subtle dimensions.[32]

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[31] McFarlane charts this pattern in Appendix B of his edition. The six geometrical shapes are: rectangle, circle, lozenge, ellipse, triangle and oval. In the 1564 Paris edition all emblems are rectangular and the borders simplified.

[32] Mulhauser perceptively demonstrates the symbolism of the tree image in the first half of the series of 50 emblems.

If we consider the connection between mottoes and *dizains*, we find that Scève is inconsistent. Sometimes he alludes to the motto in the emblem by means of the final line of the *dizain* and sometimes he does not. Is this indifference or intent? It is clear that Scève is manipulating the stock responses elicited by some of these emblems, either by means of contrast with his personal expression or by arousing questions in the reader. The broken pattern which Scève is using produces an intermittent reinforcement in the reader. A longer duration in the desired behaviour is achieved by the irregular pattern. The reader is kept alert and learns to respond in an individual fashion to the progression in the *dizains* and emblems even when a pattern is not there.

This intermittent reinforcement is one of the means Scève uses to modify the reader's perceptions, another is ambiguity in the relationship between *imprese* and *dizains*. The clear and direct connection between the two would result in closure to questions of interpretation. Scève, however, has made the *impresa-dizain* link an object of contemplation since a degree of unexplained meaning always remains. The reader is thus encouraged to meditate on the mystery and not the cliché. A brief examination of some of the irregular patterns and ambiguities will illustrate Scève's methods.

The unicorn in the first emblem appears again in woodcut 20 which shows Orpheus charming the animals. The motto which reads,

"A tous plaisir et a moy peine," indicates the paradox of the lover's condition: the lady's beauty like Orpheus' music gives everyone pleasure but to the grief-stricken lover only pain (dizain 177). In emblem 26 "La Lycorne qui se voit" the surprised unicorn is looking at its reflection in a pool of water. The motto reads "De moy ie m'espouvante," and as it is echoed in dizain 231 indicates the perplexity of the lover over the transforming effects of love on him.

While the unicorn in woodcut one is meant to evoke a traditional response to the symbolism, the unicorn in emblem 26, the unicorn surprised by its own reflection, is meant to recall an obscure story by Luca Pulci. The shepherd, Severe, was transformed into a unicorn by Diana because he fell in love with, and pursued, one of her nymphs, Lora. The lover's despair at seeing his reflection in the water is a visual parallel to that of the poet in the dizain. The last two lines express his recognition of and reaction to his condition:

> Parquoy troublé de telle anxieté,
> Voyant mon cas, de moy ie m'espouvante.

These last lines in dizain 231 take us back to the woodcut but the impresa is only a vivid suggestion of the speaker's feelings: solitude, strangeness, introspection. The difficulty of the emblem's meaning and the indirect method by which Scève employs

this meaning is one reason for the poet's troubling obscurity. The last line not only echoes the motto but also introduces associations with the mirror and the Narcissus emblems in Délie. In this regard emblem 26 seems to have less connection to the unicorn in emblem I than to various figures in other emblems.

The pattern of recurrent visual motifs accompanied by verbal reflections in the dizains follows no clear design. The re-appearance of particular thematic structures seems to follow only the temperament of the speaker and thus function as a reinforcement to the drama of the lyric sequence. In interpreting emblem 26 the reader may be helped by the fact that the engraving is one that deals with the recurrent motif of transformation. In emblem 19 Acteon has undergone partial metamorphosis. He has a deer's head and is being pursued by his hounds. The motto "Fortune par les miens me chasse," and dizain 168 stress the idea that affection may change with changing circumstances. While both wood engravings above depict transformation and despair, the Phoenix, emblem 11, suggests life, death and regeneration as does emblem 44, "Le mort ressuscitant."

The motif of mirrors, reflection and introspection recurs often.[33] Emblem 33 shows Narcissus viewing himself in a pool with

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[33] J. Frappier, "Variations sur le thème du miroir, de Bernart de Ventadour à Maurice Scève," Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Etudes Françaises, 2 (1959), 134-58.

the motto "Asses meurt qui en vain ayme." In the accompanying dizain (no. 60) the lover denies that he loves himself since he loves only his lady. A basilisk looks at itself in a mirror in emblem 21 and connotes self-destruction with the motto "Mon regard por toy me tue." This idea of turning in on oneself in a suicidal act is depicted graphically in emblem 27 where a viper kills itself with the motto "Pour te donner vie ie me donne mort." Pride and ruin are the ideas behind the peacock of emblem 34 with the motto, "Qui bien se voit orgueil abaisse."

Dorothy Coleman suggests that, rather than imitating Petrarchan authors, Scève's use of the metamorphosis motif follows the example of Latin poets of the Augustan period who employed physical transformation as a metaphor for aspects of the love experience.[34] As a unifying element in Délie the metamorphosis motif is like the mirror motif, and related to it. Both emphasize the pictorial orientation of Délie by returning again and again to the idea of appearances, the way in which historical or mythological figures view themselves. In considering the visual element in the poem, both verbal and emblematic, we must keep in mind that this love poem is part of the ancient tradition that regards the eyes as the windows of the soul.

Each of these mottoes are echoed in some way in the accompanying dizain. The very fact that these and other woodcut

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[34] Maurice Scève Poet of Love, p. 106.

motifs have a visual idea shows that the dizains are given a pictorial aspect in theme as well as in the emblem form. Each engraving and motto tells us how some figure views itself. The dizain, however, takes this self-evaluation from the surface realm of appearance to the deeper one of subjective reality.

On the other hand the opposite is also the case. Thomas M. Greene has observed that Scève "formalizes the outer world by investing it with an almost heraldic stiffness, a ceremonial majesty, withdrawing it from the commonplace and quotidian, until it becomes almost as artificial as the language that evokes it."[35] While the speaker in Délie is highly personal, he is also remote. The poet adopts an anonymous persona and articulates aspects of a tradition that is larger than the self. In this way Scève moves away from the autoreflexive and self-contained poetic of Petrarch. The impresa-dizain process contributes to this hermetic objectivity and referentiality.

In some emblems Scève deliberately rejects Renaissance interpretations of legendary stories and characters and goes back to the versions of Classical poets. The motif of self-destruction and love is found in emblem 13 which depicts Dido plunging a sword into her breast. In Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Ronsard, Dido is viewed

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35 "Image and Consciousness in Scève's Délie" in The Meaning of Mannerism, edd. F.W. Robinson and S.G. Nichols, Jr. (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1972), p. 28.

as a queen who, rather than break the vow of fidelity to her dead husband, Sychaeus, took her own life. Scève, however, puts aside this more popular Renaissance interpretation and uses Vergil's account in which Dido is a tragic figure who dies because of her irrational love for Aeneas. The impresa's motto, "Doulce la mort qui de dueil me deliure," alludes to Dido's last speech in the Aeneid which begins

> Dulces exuviae, dum fata deusque sinebat,
> accipite hanc animam mesque his exsolvite curis.[36]

In the accompanying dizain (no. 114) the poet presents an emotional argument on the sufferings due to love which is reinforced by the parallel to Dido. The final lines read

> Croire fauldra, que la Mort doulce soit,
> Qui l'Ame peult d'angoisse deliurer.

and refer to both the impresa and Vergil's Dido.

Upon closer examination, however, the implied parallel between Dido and the speaker is difficult to determine since it deals with a larger context of values than the Renaissance convention of love, fidelity and honour. The impresa-dizain link emphasizes the Vergilian account of irrational love and suicide,

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[36] Vergil's Aeneid, ed. K. Quinn (London: Oxford, 1968), 4.651-52.

however, the more common Renaissance version, from Petrarch's Triumphi for instance, lingers to add still another level of ambiguity.

In emblem 30 the motif of self-destruction is again depicted by means of the figure of Cleopatra committing suicide with two serpents. The connection between suicide and love is not clear and can only be assumed from the context of the other imprese and dizains. Here again Scève bypasses the conventional Renaissance versions of Cleopatra's story for those of Vergil and Horace. The motto, "Asses vit qui meurt quand veult," is echoed in the final lines of dizain 267:

> Ià ne fault donc que de moy ie la priue,
> Puis qu'asses vit, qui meurt, quand il desire.

and both allude to poetic accounts of these Roman authors.[37]

In both this and the former emblem the reader deals with difficult interpretations which are the result of ambiguity, oblique parallels, and a broad range of references. The reader's view of the poet's persona cannot be defined in terms of a self-contained Petrarchan figure. This remoteness within an allusive context, the repeated use of unlikely sources, the view of a tradition beyond the Renaissance canon contribute to the

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[37] Vergil, Aeneid, 8.696-97; Horace, Odes, I:37.

obscurity of Délie. With regard to Scève's verse Mario Praz observes:

> His fondness for abstruseness and allegory have been termed mediaeval; and indeed, his book is, in a way, a documentum de mottis obscuris Amoris, "which we do not wish to be understood by those who are not with us."[38]

This secrecy over the effects of love is reminiscent of the Italian dolce stil novo.

The poet's use of recurrent figures and symbols in his imprese, matched by repeated motifs and variations in the dizains, is Scève's way of directing the constantly modified perceptions of the reader. The spiritual metamorphosis that the lover undergoes in the progress of his love can be paralleled by the perceptual change that a reader experiences, a reader willing to follow the sometimes ambiguous directions of the poet.

The obscurity of dizain 6 and emblem 1, the ambiguity of dizain 231 and emblem 26, the multi-leveled relationship of dizain 195 and emblem 22 constantly pose difficulty for the reader. This allusiveness is compounded by the nature of the development in Délie. Despite recurrent motifs there is no clear pattern that can be traced numerically from dizain to dizain and emblem to emblem.

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[38] Praz, vol. I, p. 75.

However it is simple-minded to expect a hermetic poet like Scève to work in such a manner. The degree of care and purpose that emerges from a study of Délie leads one to suspect an artistic intent behind the seeming haphazardness of the poem and emblem arrangement. Is Scève aware of what he is doing? With a hermetic poet each reader must study the work carefully and make whatever decision he can.

CONCLUSION

In 1953 Odette de Mourgues began her study of Scève with this declaration:

> There are two good reasons for beginning with the term metaphysical. One is the chronological sequence of the poets I intend to study. The other derives from the preceding chapter. Of the three terms which are the object of this study, the term metaphysical can boast of a well-defined and secure position in the field of European terminology, supported by half a century of analytical criticism in this country. Whatever the divergences of critics, positive results have been obtained by now on which we may rely for a definition.[1]

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[1] Metaphysical, Baroque and Précieux Poetry, p. 7.

Despite the secure place of the term metaphysical among many scholars of English literature, the "divergences of critics," especially in Comparative Literature, has continued. The result is that scholarship based on an international perspective and a broad examination of literary phenomena has turned to baroque as the generic term for the cluster of styles, while the terms metaphysical, précieux and Petrarchan have been defined as the national variations of this general type of writing.[2]

Today a critic can no longer begin as de Mourgues did in 1953 with assumptions of the pre-eminent place of metaphysical as a major European phenomena. And while more research has also been conducted into Petrarchan and précieux poetry since the early 1950's, they too must be regarded as more narrowly confined literary styles.

As the designation for the general literary style of the period which comes between the Renaissance and the neo-classical era, baroque is limited to the cultural context of these decades: the art, sculpture, architecture and music. Another term is needed to identify a line of intellectual poetry which is not bound to any one historical period. As has been indicated in these pages some critics have begun to use hermetic to describe aspects of this kind of verse.

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[2] Segel, The Baroque Poem: A Comparative Survey.

In these chapters we have focused on this broader area of research, and have described hermetic poetry as a tradition of verse writing that is not tied to any one period or literary movement. During a given century the hermetic tradition shows its eclectic nature by adopting some of the literary characteristics of the period, for example, allegory in Dante's time, Petrarchism in Scève's and cerebral allusiveness in Eliot's. It is essentially an intellectual tradition demonstrating its complexity by means of a dense use of language which results in ambiguous, and multi-leveled forms of writing.

In the preceding chapters I have resisted reducing our understanding of hermetic poetry to compact formulae. The exploration of the topic would have been reduced by the use of pre-determined conclusions. Now, however, on the basis of the poems examined, a tentative definition of hermetic poetry can be put forth that will take us beyond Jean Frappier's "obscurité voulue, calculée du langage."[3] There are four general elements which help us to identify hermetic poetry. (1) The verse is non-rhetorical and employs figures of thought and argument as opposed to figures of style. The stilnovisti and Scève demonstrate this cerebral pre-occupation in contrast to Petrarch whose rhetoric is of the ut delectare type. (2) The style is plain and

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[3] "Aspects de l'hermétisme dans la poésie médiévale," p. 13.

direct but the simplicity is deceptive since upon closer examination the verse is complex and intellectual. Of the stilnovo poets Cavalcanti is a master of this direct and, at the same time, allusive verse. The directness and conciseness of hermetic poets can often be demonstrated in the opening lines of their poems: Guinizelli's "Al cor gentil rempaira sempre amore," Cavalcanti's "Perch'i' no spero di tornar giammai" and Dante's "Le dolci rime d'amor ch'i' solia," and "Amore e 'l cor gentil sono una cosa." Scève likewise begins with direct opening statements: "L'oeil trop ardent en mes ieunes erreurs," and "Seul auec moy, elle auec sa partie." (3) In hermetic poetry the intent of the communication is closed. It is meant for a select circle of readers and not for everyone. This is implicit in the notion of a shared doctrine and the referential nature of stil novo verse. As one canzone echoes another it creates an almost self-contained context. (4) The hermetic poet adopts an anonymous persona, a vatic voice which makes him speak for more than just his own personal feeling. Contini has already noted, and I have shown, the collaborative nature of the poesia oggettiva typified by the stilnovisti.[4] In Délie Scève is at once personal, individualistic and at the same time remote. While Petrarch speaks to us through his poems (sonnet 1, "Voi ch' ascoltate"), Scève lets the dizains speak for

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[4] Contini, "Introduzione," in Dante Alighieri, Rime (Torino: Einaudi, 1946), p. xii.

themselves. This objectivity is compounded when dizains and imprese are juxtaposed in such a manner that the poet seems to remove himself from the communication process.

This dissertation postulates that there is a long tradition of hermetic poetry in Western literary culture. In order to suggest the possible outlines of this tradition only two points on the line have been seriously examined: the stil novo and Maurice Scève. This study does not pretend to be exhaustive: questions are raised and left unattended. Many of these issues will have to be left for some future study since I neither have the expertise nor the time to deal with them here. Some general topics that come to mind are: (1) the relationship between hermetic poetry and the Western intellectual tradition—philosophy, science, psychology and religion—; (2) the relationship between hermetic poetry and given social and cultural conditions; (3) hermetic poetry and the other arts; (4) hermetic poetry and its connection to the idiosyncracies of personality in given authors like Cavalcanti, Scève and Pound.

Future scholarly investigation may trace the obscure origins of hermetic poetry in classical literature—Sextus Propertius—and in Provençal verse—Arnaut Daniel. Studies following the line of hermetic verse from ancient to modern times might include some of the following authors: Pontus de Tyard, Mallarmé, Valéry, René Char, St-John Perse, Emily Dickinson, Pound, Eliot, Michelangelo, Ungaretti, Montale, and in Canadian verse, Saint-Denys-Garneau, Anne Hébert and Rina Lasnier.

The enormity of the task that lies ahead is humbling, but the undertaking is exciting, the results satisfying.

> Je ne veux jamais être obscur, et quand je le suis,—je veux dire: quand je le suis pour un lecteur lettré, et non superficiel,—je le suis par l'impuissance de ne pas l'être.[5]

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[5] Paul Valéry, Oeuvres (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), t. I, p. 1625.

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APPENDIX A

GUIDO GUINIZELLI'S CANZONE

AL COR GENTIL REMPAIRA SEMPRE AMORE

Al cor gentil rempaira sempre amore
come l'ausello in selva a la verdura;
né fe' amor anti che gentil core,
né gentil core anti ch'amor, natura:
ch'adesso con' fu 'l sole,
si tosto lo splendore fu lucente,

né fu davanti 'l sole;
e prende amore in gentilezza loco
così propiamente
come calore in clarità di foco.

Foco d'amore in gentil cor s'aprende
come vertute in petra preziosa,
che da la stella valor no i discende
anti che 'l sol la faccia gentil cosa;
poi che n'ha tratto fòre
per sua forza lo sol ciò che li è vile,
stella li dà valore:
così lo cor ch'è fatto da natura
asletto, pur, gentile,
donna a guisa di stella lo 'nnamora.

Amor per tal ragion sta 'n cor gentile
per qual lo foco in cima del doplero:
splendeli al su' diletto, clar, sottile;
no li stari' altra guisa, tant'è fero.
Così prava natura
recontra amor come fa l'aigua il foco
caldo, per la freddura.
Amore in gentil cor prende rivera
per suo consimel loco
com'adamàs del ferro in la minera.

Fere lo sol lo fango tutto 'l giorno:
vile reman, né 'l sol perde calore;
dis' omo alter: "Gentil per sclatta torno";
lui semblo al fango, al sol gentil valore:
ché non dé dar om fé
che gentilezza sia fòr di coraggio
in degnità d'ere'
sed a vertute non ha gentil core,
com'aigua porta raggio
e 'l ciel riten le stelle e lo splendore.

Splende 'n la 'ntelligenzïa del cielo
Deo crïator più che 'n nostr'occhi 'l sole:
ella intende suo fattor oltra 'l cielo,
e 'l ciel volgiando, a Lui obedir tole;
e con' segue, al primero,
del giusto Deo beato compimento,
così dar dovria, al vero,
la bella donna, poi che 'n gli occhi splende
del suo gentil, talento
che mai di lei obedir non si disprende.

Donna, Deo mi dirà: "Che presomisti?",
sïando l'alma mia a lui davanti.

"Lo ciel passasti e 'nfin a Me venisti
e desti in vano amor Me per semblanti:
ch'a Me conven le laude
e a la reina del regname degno,
per cui cessa onne fraude".
Dir Li porò: "Tenne d'angel sembianza
che fosse del Tuo regno;
non me fu fallo, s'in lei posi amanza".

APPENDIX B

GUIDO CAVALCANTI'S CANZONE

As it appears in the manuscript "Ld," Laurenziano 46-40, folio 32 verso, with a few errors corrected. Accents added from the Giuntine edition.

		Edizione Guinta 1527
I	DONNA mi priegha	
	perch' i volglio dire	io
	D'un accidente	uno
	che sovente	
	é fero	
	Ed é sí altero	
	ch'é chiamato amore	Amore
	SICCHE chi l negha	Si chì lo
	possa il ver sentire	
	Ond a 'l presente	Ed a'l
	chonoscente	
	chero	
	Perch i no spero	io nò
	ch om di basso chore	c'huom
	ATAL ragione portj chonoscenza	raggio ne
	Chè senza	
	natural dimostramento	hó
	Non o talento	Ld. most rare
	di voler provare	Lá dove ei
	Laove nascie e chì lo fá criare	posa, è

E QUAL è sua virtu e sua potenza — sia . . vertute, e potenza MS. per
L'essenza
e poi ciaschun suo movimento
E 'l piacimento
che 'l fá dire amare
E se hom per veder lo puó mostrare:-- — huomo

II IN quella parte — Edizione Giuntina 1527
dove sta memoria
Prende suo stato — memora
sí formato — MS. su
chome
Diafan dal lume
d'una schuritade

LA qual da Marte — Loqual
viene e fa dimora
Elgli é creato
e a sensato — ed há
nome
D'alma chostume
di chor volontade — è di cor

VIEN da veduta forma ches' intende — ch ès' Giuntine and Ld Chè prende
Che 'l prende
nel possibile intelletto
Chome in subgetto
locho e dimoranza
E in quella parte mai non a possanza — há posanza MS. Ca pesança MS. risprende Edizione Giuntina 1527
PERCHE de qualitatde non disciende
Risplende
in sé perpetuale effecto
Non a diletto
mà consideranza — há
Perche non pote laire simiglglianza:--

III

NON é virtute
mà da questa vene
Perfezione
ches si pone
tale
Non razionale
mà che si sente dicho

FUOR di salute
giudichar mantene
El antenzione
per ragione
vale
Discerne male
in chui é vizio amicho

DI sua virtu seghue ispesso morte
Se forte
la virtú fosse impedita
La quale aita
la contrara via
Nonche opposito natural sia

MA quanto che da ben perfett e torte
Per sorte
non po dir om ch abbi vita
Che stabilita
non a singnioria
A simil puó valer quant uom l obblia:--

Si, ch'ei
non puote
largir
simigli-
anza
dà quella
Perchè
perfettion
si

omits si

Chè lá in-
tenzion
per ragion

MS.
Diserue

sua
potenza . . .
spesso

contraria

non perchè
opposta
naturale
buon
perfetto
tort' é
MS. forte
puó . . . c'
haggia
há
valor
quando
s'oblia

IV	LESSER é quando	MS. omits
	lo volere a tanto	é
		é
	Ch oltre	oltra
	di natura	
	torna	s'adorna
	Poi non si addorna	
	di riposo maj	
	MOVE changiando cholr riso in pianto	core, è riso
	E lla fighura	è pianto
	con paura	
	storna	
	Pocho soggiorna	
	anchor di lui vedraj	
	CHE n gente di valore il piu si trova	
	La nova	
	qualità move a sospirj	i sospiri
	E vol ch om mirj	MS. Ld
	in un formato locho	Destando-sitj
	Destandos' ira la qual manda focho	loqual
	INMAGINAR nol puo hom che nol prova	puote
	E non si mova	Giá non
	MS. Ca Ne mova già perch' a llui si tirj	Edizione Giuntina 1527
	E non si aggirj	
	per trovarvi giocho	giri
	E certamente gran saver nè pocho:--	

V

DA ssimil tragge — Né certamente
complessione e sghuardj — Di MS. comprenssione sguardo.
Che fá parere
lo piacere — omits e
piu certo — omits piu
Non puó choverto
star quand é si giunto

NON giá selvagge
la biltá son dardj — le . . dardo
Ch a tal volere — Chè tal
per temere
sperto — esperto
Hom seghue merto — Conseque
spirito che punto — ch' é

E NON si puó chonosciere per lo viso
Chompriso — , bianco,
biancho in tale obbietto chade — vade
A chi ben aude
forma non si vede — Cao informa dà lei
Perchè lo mena chi dallui procede

FUOR di cholore essere diviso — d'essere
Asciso — Assiso
mezzo schuro luce rade — in mezzo oscuro luci
Fuor d'angni fraude
dice dengno in fede
Chè solo da chostui nasce merzede:-- — di

Congedo TU puoj sichuramente gir chanzone
Dove ti piace ch i t o sí ornata ch' io t' hó si adornata
Ch assa lodata
sarà tua ragione assai
Dalle persone
ch anno intendimento
Di star con l' altre tu non aj talento:--

APPENDIX C

EZRA POUND'S TRANSLATION OF CAVALCANTI'S "DONNA ME PREGA"

DONNA ME PREGA

(Dedicace--To Thomas Campion his ghost, and to the ghost of
Henry Lawes, as prayer for the revival of music)

I Because a lady asks me, I would tell
Of an affect that comes often and is fell
And is so overweening: Love by name,
E'en its deniers can now hear the truth,
I for the nonce to them that know it call,
Having no hope at all
that man who is base in heart
Can bear his part of wit
into the light of it,
And save they know't aright from nature's source
I have no will to prove Love's course
or say
Where he takes rest; who maketh him to be;
Or what his active virtu is, or what his force;--
Nay, nor his very essence or his mode;
What his placation; why he is in verb,
Or if a man have might
To show him visible to men's sight.

II In memory's locus taketh he his state Place
Formed there in manner as a mist of light La ove
Upon a dusk that is come from Mars and stays. e

Love is created, hath a sensate name, chi lo
His modus takes from soul, from heart his will; fa
From form seen doth he start, that, understood, creare
Taketh in latent intellect--
As in a subject ready--
place and abode,
Yet in that place it ever is unstill,
Spreading its rays, it tendeth never down
By quality, but is its own effect unendingly
Not to delight, but in an ardour of thought
That the base likeness of it kindleth not.

III It is not <u>virtu</u>, but perfection's source Virtú
Lying within perfection postulate e
Not by the reason, but 'tis felt, I say. potenza
Beyond salvation, holdeth its judging force,
Maintains intention reason's peer and mate;
Poor in discernment, being thus weakness' friend,
Often his power meeteth with death in the end
Be he withstayed
or from true course
bewrayed
E'en though he meet not with hate
or villeiny
Save that perfection fails, be it but a little;
Nor can man say he hath his life by chance
Or that he hath not stablished seigniory
Or loseth power, e'en lost to memory.

IV

He comes to be and is when will's so great
It twists itself from out all natural measure;
Leisure's adornment puts he then never on,
Never thereafter, but moves changing state,
Moves changing colour, or to laugh or weep
Or wries the face with fear and little stays,
Yea, resteth little
yet is found the most
Where folk of worth be host.
And his strange property sets sights to move
And wills man look into unformèd space
Rousing there thirst
that breaketh into flame.
None can imagine love
that knows not love;
Love doth not move, but draweth all to him;
Nor doth he turn
for a whim
to find delight
Nor to seek out, surely, great knowledge or slight.

Essenza e movimento

V Look drawn from like, piacimento
delight maketh certain in seeming
Not can in covert cower,
beauty so near,
Not yet wild-cruel as darts,
So hath man craft from fear
in such his desire
To follow a noble spirit,
edge, that is, and point to the dart,
Though from her face indiscernible;
He, caught, falleth
plumb on to the spike of the targe.
Who well proceedeth, form not seeth,
following his own emanation.
There, beyond colour, essence set apart,
In midst of darkness light light giveth forth
Beyond all falsity, worthy of faith, alone
That in him solely is compassion born.

Congedo Safe may'st thou go my canzon whither thee pleaseth
Thou art so fair attired that every man and each
Shall praise thy speech
So he have sense or glow with reason's fire,
To stand with other
hast thou no desire.

APPENDIX D

DANTE'S "CANZONE TERZA"

Le dolci rime d'amor ch' i' solia
cercar ne' miei pensieri,
convien ch' io lasci; non perch'io non speri
ad esse ritornare;
ma perchè li atti disdegnosi e feri
che ne la donna mia
sono appariti m' han chiusa la via
de l' usato parlare.
E poi che tempo mi par d'aspettare,
diporrò giù lo mio soave stile,
ch' i' ho tenuto nel trattar d'amore;
e dirò del valore,
per lo qual veramente omo è gentile,
con rima aspr' e sottile;
riprovando 'l giudicio falso e vile
di quei che voglion che di gentilezza
sia principio ricchezza.
E, cominciando, chiamo quel signore
ch' a la mia donna ne li occhi dimora,
per ch' ella di se stessa s'innamora.
Tale imperò che gentilezza volse,
secondo 'l suo parere,
che fosse antica possession d'avere
con reggimenti belli;
e altri fu di più lieve savere,
che tal detto rivolse,
e l'ultima particula ne tolse,
chè non l'avea fors' elli!

Di retro da costui van tutti quelli
che fan gentile per ischiatta altrui
che lungiamente in gran ricchezza è stata;
ed è tanto durata
la così falsa oppinion tra nui,
che l'uom chiama colui
omo gentil che può dicere: 'Io fui
nepote, o figlio, di cotal valente',
benchè sia da niente.
Ma vilissimo sembra, a chi 'l ver guata,
cui è scorto 'l cammino e poscia l'erra,
e tocca a tal, ch' è morto e va per terra!
Chi diffinisce: 'Omo è legno animato',
prima dice non vero,
e, dopo 'l falso, parla non intero;
ma più forse non vede.
Similemente fu chi tenne impero
in diffinire errato,
chè prima puose 'l falso e, d'altro lato,
con difetto procede;
chè le divizie, si come si crede,
non posson gentilezza dar nè tòrre,
però che vili son da lor natura:
poi chi pinge figura,
se non può esser lei, non la può porre,
nè la diritta torre
fa piegar rivo che da lungi corre.
Che siano vili appare ed imperfette,
chè, quantunque collette,
non posson quietar, ma dan più cura;
onde l'animo ch' è dritto e verace
per lor discorrimento non si sface.

Nè voglion che vil uom gentil devegna,
nè di vil padre scenda
nazion che per gentil già mai s' intenda;
questo è da lor confesso:
onde lor ragion par che sè offenda
in tanto quanto assegna
che tempo a gentilezza si convegna,
diffinendo con esso.
Ancor, segue di ciò che innanzi ho messo,
che siam tutti gentili o ver villani,
o che non fosse ad uom cominciamento;
ma ciò io non consento,
ned ellino altressi, se son cristiani!
Per che a 'ntelletti sani
è manifesto i lor diri esser vani,
e io così per falsi li riprovo,
e da lor mi rimovo;
e dicer voglio omai, sì com' io sento,
che cosa è gentilezza, e da che vene,
e dirò i segni che 'l gentile uom tene.
Dico ch'ogni vertù principalmente
vien da una radice:
vertute, dico, che fa l'uom felice
in sua operazione.
Questo è, secondo che l' Etica dice,
un abito eligente
lo qual dimora in mezzo solamente,
e tai parole pone.
Dico che nobiltate in sua ragione
importa sempre ben del suo subietto,
come viltate importa sempre male;
e vertute cotale
dà sempre altrui di sè buono intelletto;

per che in medesmo detto
convegnono ambedue, ch' en d'uno effetto.
Onde convien da l'altra vegna l'una
o d'un terzo ciascuna;
ma se l'una val ciò che l'altra vale,
e ancor più, da lei verrà più tosto.
E ciò ch' io dett' ho qui sia per supposto.
E gentilezza dovunqu' è vertute,
ma non vertute ov'ella;
si com' è 'l cielo dovunqu' è la stella,
ma ciò non e converso.
E noi in donna e in età novella
vedem questa salute,
in quanto vergognose son tenute,
ch' è da vertù diverso.
Dunque verrà, come dal nero il perso,
ciascheduna vertute da costei,
o vero il gener lor, ch' io misi avanti.
Però nessun si vanti
dicendo: 'Per ischiatta io son con lei',
ch' elli son quasi dei
quei c' han tal grazia fuor di tutti rei;
chè solo Iddio a l'anima la dona
che vede in sua persona
perfettamente star: si ch' ad alquanti
che seme di felicità sia costa,
messo da Dio ne l'anima ben posta.
L'anima cui adorna esta bontate
non la si tiene ascosa,
chè dal principio ch' al corpo si sposa
la mostra infin la morte.

Ubidente, soave e vergognosa
è ne la prima etate,
e sua persona adorna di bieltate
con le sue parti accorte;
in giovinezza, temperata e forte,
piena d'amore et di cortese lode,
e solo in lealtà far si diletta;
è ne la sua senetta
prudente e giusta, e larghezza se n'ode,
e 'n se medesma gode
d'udire e ragionar de l'altrui prode;
poi ne la quarta parte de la vita
a Dio si rimarita,
contemplando la fine che l'aspetta,
e benedice li tempi passati.
Vedete omai quanti son l'ingannati!
Contra-li-erranti mia, tu te n'andrai;
e quando tu sarai
in parte dove sia la donna nostra,
non le tenere il tuo mestier coverto
tu le puoi dir per certo:
"Io vo parlando de l'amica vostra"

APPENDIX E

Selected emblems from Scève's Délie as they are reproduced in the edition by I.D. McFarlane.

La femme & la Lycorne

EMBLEM I

Motto: Pour le veoir (1564 voir) ie pers la vie.

Narcissus

EMBLEM VII

Motto: Asses (1564 Assez) meurt qui en vain ayme.

Acteon

EMBLEM XIX

Motto: Fortune par les miens me chasse.

Le Basilisque, & le Miroir

EMBLEM XXI

Motto: Mon regard par toy me tue.

Le Bateau a rames froissées

EMBLEM XXII

Motto: Mes forces de iour en iour s'abaissent.

La Lycorne qui se uoit

EMBLEM XXVI

Motto: De moy ie m'espouante (1564 me espouuante).